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ABSTRACT

The Radio-Television Journalism Division of the proceedings contains the following 11 papers: "In Whose Best Interest? FCC Deregulation and Local News: How Cross-Ownership, National Caps, and Duopolies Are Addressed in Three Commissioned Studies" (Laura K. Smith); "Remembering the News: The Effect of Chronological Presentation of Information on Memory for Broadcast News" (Mark Kelley); "Job Satisfaction of Newsmagazine Correspondents Compared to Regular News Correspondents" (Cindy J. Price); "'It Looks Like a Fun Job!': An Examination of Media Exposure and the Cultivation of Perceptions about a Broadcast Journalism Career" (Laura M. Trendle Polus); "Sex, Drugs, and TV News: When a Reporter Is Arrested" (Mary Blue and Nancy McKenzie Dupont); "It's in the Visuals!: Journalists and Gender Issues in Television Network News Coverage of the 1996 U.S. Presidential Election" (Kimmerly S. Piper-Aiken); "Civil Liberties and Mobilization Information in Press Coverage of the USA PATRIOT Act" (Jessica Matthews); "The Effects of Preferred Radio Format on Listeners' Attention, Retention, and Loyalty" (Thomas W. Smee, Jessica Matthews, Amanda Rotondo, and Craig Stark); "Race and Gender: An Analysis of the Sources and Reporters in the Networks' Coverage of the Year 2000 Presidential Campaign" (Geri Alumit Zeldes and Frederick Fico); "The Changing Role of Sports in Local Television News" (Brad Schultz); and "Increasing Candidate-Centered Televised Discourse: Evaluating Local News Coverage of Campaign 2000" (Stephen J. Farnsworth and S. Robert Lichter). (RS)

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IN WHOSE BEST INTEREST?
FCC DEREGULATION AND LOCAL NEWS:
How Cross-Ownership, National Caps, and Duopolies are addressed in Three Commissioned Studies

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IN WHOSE BEST INTEREST? FCC Deregulation & Local News: How Cross-Ownership, National Caps, and Duopolies are addressed in Three Commissioned Studies

On December 3, 2002, Jonathan Adelstein was sworn in as a member of the Federal Communication Commission. His appointment brought the five-person panel to full membership for the first time in more than a year (Shields, 2002). The 40-year-old Democrat joined the Commission at a critical moment in U.S. media history. The FCC's third Biennial Regulatory Review of Broadcast Ownership Rules is currently underway. Launched in September 2002, the review marked "the beginning of the most comprehensive look at media ownership regulation ever undertaken by the FCC" ("FCC Initiates," 2002). According to the FCC, "the objective of this proceeding is to develop ownership rules and policies that are reflective of the current media marketplace, are based on empirical evidence, and are analytically consistent" ("FCC Initiates").

By way of the *Telecommunications Act of 1996*,[1] Congress mandates that the FCC review the nation's broadcast ownership rules every other year. At issue is whether the policies remain necessary to protect the public interest or whether evolving market forces (e.g., competition and technological advancements) eliminate the need for such regulation. Last September, the FCC announced it would review all six media ownership rules related to use of the broadcast spectrum.[2] The rules include:

- Newspaper/Broadcast Cross-Ownership Prohibition (1975)
- Local Radio Ownership (1941)
- Radio/TV Cross-Ownership Restriction (1970)
- Dual Television Network Rule (1946)
- National TV Ownership (1941)
- Local TV Multiple Ownership (1964)

Half of these rules have been in place for more than 60 years. In light of recent legislative and judicial actions, the political landscape, and a fast-changing media market, the commission is reconsidering the need for restrictions (*Fox v. FCC*, 2002; *Sinclair v. FCC*, 2002, 1996 *Telecommunications Act*).

The following paper examines the information upon which the FCC will rely to make its decision. The majority of this information comes in the form of twelve empirical studies, commissioned by the FCC's Media Ownership Working Group (MOWG) and released to the public this fall for review and comment. Conducted by researchers in academia as well as staff members within the FCC, the studies are designed to examine "the media marketplace and improve the FCC's knowledge base and ability to make informed media policy decisions" ("FCC Releases," 2002). According to Chairman Michael Powell, "it is critical that the FCC has a solid factual base to support its media ownership rules" ("FCC Releases," 2002).

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[1] Telecommunications Act of 1996, Pub. LA. No. 104-104, 110 Stat. 56 (1996).

[2] The FCC issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on September 23, 2002 (MM Docket No. 02-277).

Of al! the media resources available to the public, research shows Americans rely most heavily on *local television* for news and current affairs ("Consumer Survey," 2002). According to Nielsen Media Research, more than 92 percent of Americans have tuned in to local news in the past week to collect information, more than newspapers (79 percent), radio (68 percent), the Internet (34 percent) or magazines (20 percent). Given the significant role of local television in the lives and interests of the American public, this author analyzes research contained in the FCC studies as it pertains to local television news – looking closely at the evidence which Chairman Powell says will drive the FCC's upcoming decisions ("FCC Chairman," 2002).

THE DECISION-MAKING CLIMATE: SOME HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Before analyzing the relevant studies, it is important to understand the current judicial, legislative, and political climate in which the FCC's decisions will be made. Several congressional and court decisions are affecting the nature of the FCC's current examination.

Deregulatory Trends:

For nearly two decades, media policy in the United States has moved steadily towards deregulation. The trend began in 1984 with the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *FCC v. League of Women Voters*.[3] At issue, in part, was the FCC's Fairness Doctrine (which became law in 1949). Based on the concept that the public airwaves are a scarce resource, the doctrine required broadcasters to offer balanced coverage of controversial issues in their communities as a condition of getting their licenses from the FCC. While the high court found the doctrine to be constitutional in general, justices found the underlying scarcity rationale "wanting." Following the Court's lead, the FCC suspended the doctrine three years later.[4] Bills that would have re-instituted the doctrine passed the U.S. House and Senate in 1987 but President Ronald Regan vetoed both. Two years later, President George Bush vetoed a similar bill. In 1991, hearings were again held on the Doctrine, but Bush's ongoing veto threat stymied passage ("Broadcasting Fairness", 1997).

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[3] FCC v. League of Women Voters, Supreme Court of the United States, 468 U.S. 364, No. 82-912 (1984).

[4] See Syracuse Peace Council, 2 FCC Rcd 5043 (1987).

IN WHOSE BEST INTEREST? FCC Deregulation & Local News: How Cross-Ownership, National Caps, and Duopolies are addressed in Three Commissioned Studies

The FCC took another step toward changing television rules in May, 1992. The Commission invited comment on: (1) raising the national television ownership limits from the current 12 station / 25 percent audience; and (2) relaxing the so-called duopoly rule ("FCC Takes," 1992).[5] According to then-Commissioner Sherrie Marshall, increased competition "is now performing much of the diversity-protection role of several of our broadcast ownership rules" by providing consumers with a proliferation of viewing choices ("FCC Takes"). In 1994, the FCC announced plans to revise broadcast ownership rules (McConnell, 1996).

The FCC was not alone in its interest in revising broadcast ownership rules. In 1996, Congress passed the first major overhaul in telecommunications law in 62 years ("Telecommunications Act"). The Telecom Act significantly loosened restrictions on media ownership in the United States. Among other things, it: (1) eliminated a national limit on the number of radio stations one company can own; (2) eased restrictions on the number of radio stations one company can own in a single market; and (3) raised from 25 percent to 35 percent the national cap on the number of television stations on company can own. Lawmakers did not expressly change *local* television ownership rules. The legislation, however, gave the FCC the power to amend broadcast rules in order to help broadcast television stations compete with cable and video companies. Soon after the act's passage, the FCC began entertaining the idea of further loosening the local television ownership rules (McConnell & Rathbun, 1996; Petrozzello, 1996).

The political environment was, however, changing. A new president had taken office. Increasingly concerned about the public interest and rapidly-consolidating radio ownership (resulting directly from the Telecom Act), President William "Bill" Clinton got involved. In May 1997, the White House issued a letter to FCC Chairman Reed Hunt opposing relaxation of the FCC's so-called duopoly rules (Fitzgerald, 1997). The president's intervention marked an end to fast-moving deregulation. During the Clinton administration, concern about media concentration grew. Under the watch of newly-appointed Chairman William Kennard and the Clinton Administration, the FCC's existing limits on broadcast ownership were strongly enforced and defended (McConnell, 1998; Mundy, 1998).

Responding to the change in the regulatory tide, broadcast industry executives began lobbying Congress, arguing that they would take the government to court if it did not re-examine ownership policies (McConnell, 1998; Stern, 1999). The FCC got the message. In July 1999, staff members urged the commission to end the ban on duopolies ("Staff Tells FCC," 1999).[6] One month later, in a 4-to-1 vote, the FCC changed broadcast ownership rules: (1) allowing duopolies under certain, limited conditions; and (2) relaxing limits on cross-ownership of television and radio stations.[7] Chairman Kennard said the changes were aimed at clearing up regulatory mess of patchwork rules and waivers being applied on a case-by-case basis and that the goal was to produce a "bright line" rule that would make clear what would be allowed (Stern, 1999).

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[5] This rule limits the number of stations a single company can own in a local television market. Specifically, the commission considered whether to permit ownership of two UHF stations or a UHF-VHF combination in a single market as long as there were at least six independently-owned stations remaining in the market after the combination (McConnell, 1996).

The "bright line" has been anything but. Media companies continue to chip away at the broadcast regulations. One target is the FCC's "eight voices" regulation. FCC policy allows companies to own two TV stations in the same market under limited conditions, including a requirement that eight independent broadcast owners remain in the market. In 2001, broadcasters began lobbying Congress to change the "eight voices" rule, claiming it negatively impacted their ability to do business in smaller media markets which do not have enough advertising revenue to sustain so many independent broadcast voices (McConnell, 2001). Some media companies also challenged the 35 percent national ownership cap, rules banning cross-ownership of cable companies by TV and newspapers, and the ban on cross-ownership of newspapers and television stations in the same broadcast market. Executives claimed the rules were based upon arbitrary standards and interfered with their ability to do business. Later that year, the FCC announced it would revise broadcast and cable television ownership rules, considering "impact of cross-ownership on diversity of viewpoints and news sources" (Mundy, 2001).

Before the FCC could make any changes, the U.S. Court of Appeals got involved. In 2002, the 3rd Circuit ruled in two key cases involving media ownership regulations. In both cases, judges found in favor of broadcasters. In *Fox v. FCC* (2002), the Court reviewed the National Television Station Ownership Rule (NTSO) and the Cable/Broadcasting Cross-Ownership Rule (CBCO). The Court struck down the FCC's ban on cross-ownership of cable and television in the same market. With respect to the NTSO, while reaffirming the constitutionality of a national ownership cap in general, judges ruled the FCC must justify why 35 percent is not an "arbitrary and capricious" figure. The court stated, "Although we agree with he Commission that protecting diversity is a permissible policy, the Commission did not provide an adequate basis for believing the rules would in fact further that cause" (*Fox v. FCC*). Two months later, the same court ruled against the FCC's local television duopoly rules, taking issue with the "eight voices" diversity standard (*Sinclair v. FCC*, 2002). As in the *FOX* case, the Court called the "eight voices" requirement "arbitrary and capricious." The judges remanded the case. They asked the FCC to provide empirical or analytical evidence that eight independent broadcast owners (versus some other number) are necessary to protect the public interest.[8]

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[6] Duopolies are cases in which one company is allowed to own and operate two stations within the same local, Nielsen media market.

[7] Federal Communications Commission Report & Order 99-209. Adopted Aug. 5, 1999. Released Aug. 6, 1999.

Courts, Congress, and a Republican Regime: The Current Empirical Push

The judicial and legislative branches are together having a profound effect on the evolution of America's broadcast ownership regulations. The 3rd Circuit has argued that the FCC's regulations lack empirical foundation (*FOX v. FCC*; *Sinclair v. FCC*). Both rulings challenge the FCC to base future decisions on a solid "empirical" record rather than more "emotional" public interest arguments. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 also is impacting the shape (and frequency) of the debate. In addition to eliminating or relaxing specific broadcast standards, Section 202(h) of the act directs the FCC to review its ownership rules every two years in light of competitive developments in the broadcast industry.

The executive branch also is a factor in the process. Since taking office in 2001, President George W. Bush has supported deregulation in matters relating to government policy and the marketplace. Clearly, the broadcast industry sees the Bush Administration as an ally in its regulatory struggles. Gannett Co, Incorporated, believed that Bush's election "produces another likely benefit for broadcasting" ("Turning Challenges," 2000, p. 4). In their letter t[illegible]holders, included in the company's 2000 Annual Report entitled Turning Challenges into Opportunities, retired Chairman John J. Curley and current Chairman, President & CEO Douglas H. McCorkindale write:

> There's a new mood at the FCC and we are hoping to see the end of cross-ownership rules that have so restricted our expansion into a number of markets. Our industry, hamstrung by these unnecessary rules, will seize the many opportunities that will arise when the rules change. ("Turning Challenges," p. 4)

At the time of the report's publication, Gannett's media holdings included 22 television stations, reaching 17.4 percent of U.S. television market and more than 100 daily newspapers in 41 states ("Turning Challenges").

The mood and make-up of the Federal Communications Commission is clearly important. As already noted, the FCC is at full strength for the first time in a year. In February 2002, the White House named Jonathan Adelstein to the FCC. The Democrat's appointment, however, became caught up in partisan wrangling on Capital Hill (Bischoff, 2002). It took ten months for Adelstein to be confirmed. His appointment gives the republicans on the FCC a 3-2 majority. Adelstein joined Michael Copps in the commission's democratic minority. The panel's three Republican members include its chairman, Michael Powell (son of Secretary of State Colin Powell).

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[8] Under the 1996 Telecommunications Act, when it comes to radio ownership, those eight distinct voices can include *any* media outlets (newspapers, radio, television, and cable). Petitioners also questioned the justifiability of applying a different standard to radio versus television broadcasters.

Framing the Policy Debate & Setting the FCC's Agenda

In combination, the courts, Congress, and the current political administration have reframed the FCC's policy debate from one of public interest to one of market economics and competition. This constitutes a significant change in broadcast policy and perspective, particularly compared to nation's first broadcast rules and regulations (codified through the 1934 Telecommunications Act). As a direct result of these changes, the FCC is currently reviewing all six broadcast ownership rules.

In making its decision, the FCC will rely heavily on 12 studies commissioned in 2001. The studies examine "the current state of the media marketplace, including how consumers use the media, how advertisers view the different media outlets, and how media ownership affects diversity, localism and competition" ("FCC Releases," 2002). Each is designed to provide empirical evidence useful in the commission's upcoming decisions. According to Chairman Powell: "These studies represent an unprecedented data-gathering effort to better understand market and consumer issues so that we may develop sound public policy" ("FCC Releases," 2002).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

This research paper examines the FCC's 12 studies, paying attention to research pertaining to television news. Of particular interest is the relationship between increased consolidation and quality of news content in local markets. Specifically, the author seeks to answer the following research questions:

R1: How do these studies directly or indirectly address ownership consolidation and its potential impact on local TV news content?

R2: How do these studies' findings bear on duopoly regulations?

R3: How do these authors frame/discuss the need for continued broadcast regulation?

METHODOLOGY:

While this study relies on quantitative analyses, it is qualitative in nature. It scrutinizes each study's research questions, theoretical foundations, methodologies, operational definitions, and conclusions. It evaluates perceived strengths and weaknesses in each study as it relates to the examination of local television news. The author examines the studies based on the information provided in the original twelve documents (and *not* the additional data provided later in the public comment period).[9]

The 12 studies are divided equally into two general subject areas: consumer and market-based research. The division seems to be somewhat arbitrary. A number of exciting and potentially-important content questions are addressed in the so-called market studies while several market-oriented discussions take place in the content category. Some 23 authors contributed to the analyses, several of whom participated in multiple studies. The majority of researchers are employed directly by the FCC. Four are academics from higher-education institutions. One author is, in fact, a media research firm.

As noted earlier, it is *this* author's intent to focus on issues in these studies which involve television news, in general, and local television news in particular. I look first, then, at a study which examines mass media use. In Study #8, Nielsen Media Research surveyed media habits ("Consumer Survey," 2002). This is one of the few times in which researchers actually talked to the public.[10] Although the sample frame may be skewing the results,[11] Nielsen's findings suggest Americans rely on television more than any other medium for both local and national news. When asked: "What sources, if any, have you used in the past seven days for national news and current affairs?," 92 percent of respondents reported using television, 71 percent newspapers, 56 percent radio, 32 percent Internet, and 20 percent magazines.[12] Similar patterns emerged locally. The majority of respondents reported getting their local news and public affairs from a combination of television (92 percent), newspapers (79 percent), and radio (68 percent) in the past seven days. Internet and magazine use was 34 percent and 20 percent respectively at the local level.[13]

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[9] The FCC made all 12 studies available via the internet on October 1, 2002 at www.fcc.gov/ownership/studies.html. After making the studies public, the Commission received six petitions asking for more details about methodology and access to raw data underlying the results. The Commission responded on November 5, 2002, releasing additional information and extending the period for public comment. The new information includes revised findings, SPSS files, and Excel spreadsheets for seven of the 12 studies.

[10] Study #3 examines substitution of media by consumers, but the researcher uses aggregate data obtained by Scarborough. It was not collected for the purposes of the FCC studies.

[11] Surveyors only contacted people 18 years and older in US households which had completed a Nielsen diary during February or May of 2002, meaning only households with televisions were surveyed. In addition, fewer than 30 percent of those contacted actually participated. As Nielsen points out, "characteristics of non-contacted and non-cooperating households may differ from the households used in this report." (p. 12). Findings about media use would likely be different if random sample of Americans was conducted.

[12] Numbers are rounded.

According to Study #4 (Brown & Williams, 2002), the general purpose of all the FCC's studies is to "contribute to a better understanding of the consequences of consolidation" (p. 2). Given the FCC's pending decisions, and the media use information cited above, it is important to closely examine research which contributes to our understanding of public and media interests at the local level. Very few of the FCC's 12 studies, however, address news directly – either local or national. Several focus instead on radio playlists and formats, the diversity and expansion of media outlets, and advertising rates. There are three, however, which bear on these critical concerns. Respectively, they have serious implications for cross-ownership, the national limit, and duopolies. I analyze them here in detail, beginning with the *only* study that ponders the relationship between consolidation and *actual* news content.

Consolidation & Content: The Impact of Cross-Ownership

In *Viewpoint Diversity in Cross-Owned Newspapers and Television Stations*, David Pritchard (2002) analyzes news coverage of the 2000 Presidential campaign. The goal of this study (#2) is to determine to what extent commonly-owned newspapers and television stations in a community speak with a single voice about important political matters. Current FCC regulations prohibit the grant of a broadcast license to a company that owns a newspaper in the same community. As a result of being grand-fathered into the 1975 rule change as well as waivers granted in recent years, however, 17 such combinations existed in the U.S. by mid-2002. Another 10 newspaper-radio-television combinations also were in operation.

The primary purpose of the FCC's cross-ownership ban is to preserve a diversity of viewpoints in local media. As Pritchard points out, the concern is twofold: (1) local cross-ownership might result in a reduction of viewpoint diversity in the community's media, and (2) a single owner might actively manipulate the news disseminated by its newspaper and broadcast properties in an attempt to influence local public opinion. In order to study whether these two concerns bear out in the "marketplace," the author analyzed news content generated by cross-owned newspapers and television stations. According to Pritchard, conditions in the 2000 presidential elections were ideal for such a study.[14]

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[13] These results are weighted for U.S. demographics based on an equal probability sample.

[14] The author gave three reasons for this. First, the race was close between two major-party candidates. Second, legal conditions were perfect due to the FCC's suspension of both the Personal Attack Rule and the Political

At present, 27 newspaper-TV pairings exist in the United States as a result of FCC waivers. The author selected 10 of those pairs for his examination, although he did not stipulate how those organizations were chosen. Eight of the 10 are in large-market cities. Two were in smaller markets. Prichard examined news and comments for 15 days of the campaign (between October 23 and November 6). In the newspapers, he and his coders looked at news stories, editorials, editorial cartoons, staff-written opinion columns, syndicated opinion columns, guest opinion essays, letters from readers, and free-standing photographs. On the television side of the equation, they looked at news stories which ran in the late evening local newscasts. Coders analyzed campaign items for "slant."[15] Items were either "Favorable to Gore," "Favorable to Bush," or "Neutral."[16] Coders also examined whether the newspaper endorsed a particular candidate.[17] For each organization, Pritchard computed a "coefficient of slant," where -100 = Pro-Gore; 0 = Neutral; and +100 = Pro-Bush. He then analyzed the magnitude of difference in slant coefficients between the cross-owned newspapers and television stations, seeking evidence of distinct media viewpoints on the campaign.

According to Pritchard, in half of the combinations (5 of 10), overall slant of broadcast coverage by a company's television station was "noticeably different" from that of their own newspaper. In the other five, overall "slant" of newspaper coverage was not "significantly different." Thus, the author concluded there was "no generalized evidence of ownership manipulation of the news in the situations of local cross-ownership we studied." He concludes "common ownership does *not* result in a predictable pattern of news coverage and commentary about important political events in the commonly owned outlets." In his opinion:

> Overall, the range of viewpoints in the campaign coverage of the cross-owned media under study tended to reflect the range of viewpoints discussed by the leading candidates for the presidency. In other words, cross-owned newspapers and broadcast stations covered the campaign in the way that mainstream American news organizations typically cover political campaigns.

Editorial Rule, which meant "broadcasters had more legal freedom to cover the 2000 campaign than any other campaign in recent memory" (p.4). Third, and perhaps most importantly, the two leading candidates had different political views on the relaxation of newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership rules. Republican candidate George W. Bush was thought to support deregulation while then-Vice President Albert Gore was thought to favor retention of the rule. At issue at issue is whether the broadcast corporations might be more likely to support a Presidential candidate that supports their own financial bottom line or political interests… such as repealing the rule.

[15] Operationally-defined, coders asked themselves if, from the point of view of a hypothetical interested but undecided voter, the item would likely induce the person to vote for a particular candidate.

[16] Items were coded as neutral if they favored third-party candidates, were equally flattering or unflattering to Bush and Gore, or if they addressed polls and campaign strategies.

[17] Inter-coder reliability was very high at 92 percent.

Despite a limited number of observations and missing or incomplete data from several of the news operations,[18] Pritchard seemed confident that his findings were representative of the larger picture of media cross-ownership in particular and the mass media's coverage of the campaign in general.

Many researchers, however, would not be so confident. First, it is impossible to know whether this study paints a representative picture of cross-owned coverage in America, as the author did not stipulate his method for selecting these 10 pairings. Was this a convenience sample or were the pairs randomly selected? Market size could confound the results. Eight of the 10 pairings involve media organizations in large markets. It is unclear whether small-market conditions would lead to the same results and/or conclusions. Second, in his research design, the author made a choice that could be having serious effects on his findings. In this study, he did not compare cross-owned coverage with non-cross owned coverage. The question is not only whether content differences are discernible *within* cross-owned pairings but also whether they are different *between* cross-owned and non-cross-owned pairings. In other words, how different would the picture look if one examined news content in consolidated markets versus non-consolidated markets? It is entirely possible that the "slant coefficients" would be different in other markets. We will not know the answer until more research is conducted.

In regard to "slant coefficients," there are problems with the study's statistical analyses on two fronts: (1) in the statistics chosen for the level of measurement; and (2) in the lack of statistical information provided. First, I address the construction of the "slant coefficient" itself. The coefficient was created by averaging items which were originally coded as Pro-Bush, Pro-Gore, or Neutral. The original level of data is categorical. However, the author converted this data into higher-level data and used the newly-created coefficients to run independent samples t-tests. These are inappropriate statistical tests for this level of data. T-tests are designed for use with continual variables only, not categorical ones. This means that a necessary assumption underlying the test was not satisfied (normal distribution). It would have been far preferable to run chi square tests, which *are* appropriate for categorical data (and where assumptions are fewer). These tests are less sensitive and may produce more accurate statistical results.

Even if the author had attempted to justify his statistical procedures, the way he presented his findings is awkward at best. When comparing "slant coefficients," Pritchard's analysis showed, in half of the cases, the slant of broadcast coverage was "meaningful" or "noticeably different" from newspaper coverage. Pritchard did not say whether that difference is statistically significant. The reader is unable to determine this for him/herself given the data provided in the original document.[19] The author conducted an independent samples t-test but did not provide the necessary benchmark t-statistics. It appears, however (using the author's footnote #15) that Pritchard determined that 83 percent (with a corresponding p-value of .17) constituted a "meaningful difference." While he did not provide actual p-values, of the five pairs deemed to show no "meaningful difference," it appears that Fargo was p=.17, in two other cases p=.11. None of these would be considered statistically significant under even the most lenient social science standards. In two cases, the p-values appear to be .04 (Phoenix) and .01 (New York/News Corp.) respectively, which are statistically significant.

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[18] For TV stations, Pritchard used tapes provided by stations of late-evening newscasts. In one case, the tape was not available so coders used a written script of the program. In another case, the station supplied a log sheet and tape of reporter packages. Shorter stories could not, then, be coded. As for the newspapers, content of 5 of 7 papers was drawn from Lexis/Nexis. In two other cases, the newspapers supplied photocopies of their political coverage.

The question here is whether "meaningful" or "significant" should be the standard applied. Since the U.S. Court of Appeals and the FCC argue that all decisions should be based on standardized empirical evidence (*Fox v. FCC*; *Sinclair v. FCC*; "FCC Initiates," 2002), it seems reasonable to, at the very least, apply a p-value of .05 (one of the most basic empirical standards in social science). Consequently, one is forced to question this study's findings. Reading Pritchard's conclusions, one would assume that cross-ownership has no "predictable" effect on news and editorial content. Closer analysis suggests the differences between the TV station's slant and the newspaper slant are significant in *only two* of the 10 cases. This means in eight of 10 cases, the coverage "slant" is not statistically different in print and on TV. Also, the author chooses not to make much of the fact that 7 papers endorsed Bush whereas only one endorsed Gore while two were neutral. As the author points out, the papers' editorial endorsement is a variable worthy of studying, yet he did not address this lopsided finding. He did, however, note that the Tribune Company, which owned four papers in the study, did not require its papers to coordinate endorsement.[20] This is perhaps the most interesting and useful finding in the study. It suggests a media company can allow editorial writers and managers in different parts of the country to voice their views without corporate coordination.

While the limited numbers of observations included in the study "prevent us from drawing firm or sweeping conclusions about the findings," Pritchard apparently feels comfortable doing just that. In his executive summary, he says common ownership "does not result in a predictable pattern of news coverage and commentary about important political events in the commonly owned outlets." Given the critique above, one could easily argue the opposite – that in 80 percent of the cases, the difference in "slant" between newspapers and television stations owned by the same companies were not significant. In short, Pritchard suggests there is nothing to fear by allowing more cross-ownership in the United

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[19] As noted earlier, I am not re-running statistical analyses based on data supplied later in the public comment period.

[20] Two endorsed Bush, one endorsed Gore, and one made no endorsement.

States. These findings, however, are lacking on too many fronts to help the FCC make an informed decision. Better research design, improved sampling methods, and more appropriate statistical analyses are required to answer the critical questions left unresolved by this study.

Consolidation & Quality: Assessing the Need for a National Cap

I turn next to questions of quality. Study #7, conducted by Spavins, Roberts, and Frenette (2002), examines the performance of television stations owned and operated by America's four largest broadcast networks (ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX) relative to the performance of affiliates.[21] The underlying question is whether the quality of local television news and public affairs would be positively or negatively impacted by the lifting of a national cap that currently keeps networks (or any other ownership group) from reaching more than 35 percent of American viewers. In this study, the authors do not directly examine actual programming content, however. Instead, they use ratings, awards, and amount of time devoted to news as *implied* measures of quality.

Spavins, Roberts, and Frenette restricted their study to markets where there was at least one Owned & Operated (O&O) station competing head-to-head with at least one network affiliate.[22] The authors list 106 stations (from 26 markets) in top-50 markets and another 24 stations (from six markets) in markets 54-177. The importance of this top-50 distinction will become apparent. When counting awards, the researchers count the number of RTNDA (Radio and Television News Director's Association) annual awards and Silver Baton of the A.I. DuPont Awards.[23] For ratings, the researchers use figures obtained for the 5:30 and 6pm newscasts during the November 2000 Nielsen sweeps. The authors counted the hours of public affairs programming aired during the same time frame. Finally, they counted cross-ownership conditions (cases where the affiliate and a local newspaper were owned by the same company).

The authors said they found no "meaningful difference" between the performance of O&O and affiliates in the ratings of local evening news. With respect to the receipt of awards, however, data indicate that O&Os experience "greater success" than do affiliates. Regarding quantity of content delivered, O&Os produce, on average, more local news and public affairs programming than other affiliates. In one final result, the authors say cross-ownership appears to positively affect both quality and content of local news programming. In combination, the results suggest network ownership *and* cross-ownership both lead to better news.

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[21] Affiliates are largely owned and operated by media groups (such as Gannett, Belo, etc.). If the national cap was lifted or expanded, the networks (as well as other ownership groups) would be in a position to own and operate more stations, leading to efficiencies of scale.

[22] Again, the authors included only NBC, CBS, ABC, and FOX in their data set. However, there was one case in which a WB station, KNTV in San Francisco, was listed in the Appendix as being included in the analysis.

[23] The RTNDA awards were received in the years 2000 and 2001. The DuPont awards were received between 1991 and 2002 (a span of 11 years).

There are multiple shortcomings in this research, however, both methodologically and theoretically. First, and foremost, the authors fail to provide a theoretical foundation for conducting this particular analysis. Why would one theorize that network-owned stations would produce higher-quality news than, for example, stations owned by well-respected media organizations such as Gannett, Media General, Hearst-Argyle, or Belo? All have long traditions of producing news in local markets. The authors do not even attempt to theorize the reason for making such a comparison. Similarly, the authors fail to provide a theoretical argument for why they would expect to find quality differences between cross-owned and non-cross-owned stations. This is especially troublesome given a key analytic decision the authors made in applying this variable in the current analysis. As they point out in a footnote, they operationally define a station as being co-owned if the company "owns at least one television station and one daily newspaper *irrespective* of whether any two of the commonly-owned outlets were in the same local market."[24] Given this definition, there appears to be no sound reason for conducting such a comparison.

Also troubling is how the authors reported their findings: as pure numbers, percentages, or indexes. While the figures included represent relatively higher or lower quality, the reader has no way of knowing what these differences actually mean. The authors did not report conducting any statistical tests. Take, for example, the index of RTNDA award winners.[25] The network index was reported as 126 (26 percent above the average) versus 96 for affiliates (4 percent below the average). When comparing awards among cross-owned affiliates versus non-cross-owned ones, the indexes of RTNDA awards were 319 and 22 respectively. This appears to be a huge difference. What we don't know is whether these differences are statistically significant. Short of re-examining the raw data, it is impossible to analyze the findings with any degree of validity.

Spavins, Roberts, and Frenette did acknowledge some of the limitations of their data. They said their results necessarily relied on the data upon which it was based, including the selection of stations, the use of specific awards, and the use of ratings. There are methodological problems with each of these factors. Regarding the sample frame, several of the markets included in the analysis were not in the top-50. This is extremely important in the current analysis, as RTNDA does not give awards to stations outside the top-50 markets. The authors, however, never tell us what impact this fact has on their analyses. Lacking a key variable, it seems that the authors should have eliminated from consideration all stations which did not qualify for awards in the first place. They do not report having done so, which implies they have incorporated these smaller-market stations into their tabulations.

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[24] See Footnote #1 in the original study.

[25] This is reported as an index of the success of the stations in each category relative to the per-station average of awards for each award's sample base (where 100 equals the average; 200=2x as many awards, and 50= _ as many)

Regarding ratings, the authors used only the 5:30 and 6 p.m. newscasts into their equation. In the television news business, stations often focus resources and attention on different newscasts as their "newscasts of record." These differences vary by market and by time zone. On the East Coast, for example, the 6 p.m. is highly important while the 10 p.m. is often the most heralded newscast on the West Coast and in Central/Mountain time zones. In addition, there are serious questions about the effect of "lead-in" on the 5:30 and 6 p.m. ratings. At several stations, Oprah Winfrey's program precedes the newscast, giving the station a huge boost – a head start on "quality" the other stations do not have. For these reasons alone, it would have been far superior to use ratings for each of the stations' newscasts and public affairs programs to create an average.

All of this analysis assumes that ratings and awards are, in fact, adequate measures of quality. The authors contend that ratings directly measure viewer choice to the extent that viewers find the quality of the program worth watching relative to other programs and other uses of their time. There are several opposing arguments, however. Ratings can be driven by factors external to quality: which station has the handsomest or friendliest anchor, which station airs lottery numbers, or (as noted above) which show precedes the newscast. To complicate matters, what content stations run in their newscasts (and in which newscasts they run it) is often driven by research and consultants regardless of quality concerns. Often, the question for broadcasters is: What will bring the most eyes to the television set (and keep them there)? While ratings may be a direct measure of viewer choice, one can easily argue that they do not, by themselves, adequately gauge quality.[26]

Spavins, Roberts, and Frenette argued that awards are another way of assessing relative performance. Their contention was that industry practitioners, by applying detailed knowledge of their craft, are often in the best position to identify excellence in the awards process. Although this is a solid argument, awards do not simply arrive at the doorstep. Stations must first submit content for consideration. Financial and cultural considerations play a significant role in this process. First, in most cases, it costs money to submit award entries. Second, someone must be paid (or given time) to coordinate and submit the station's entries. Lastly, many stations (and ownership groups) simply don't value awards, so they don't enter. In addition, this process can be political. Certain employees or news units frequently are favored over others when it comes time to consider award submissions. Given that the presence or absence of awards is defined by exogenous variables, this measure is problematic.

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[26] This is not to say viewers are incapable of deciding what constitutes a quality news product. It is to say, however, that ratings alone are insufficient measures. This argument will be expanded below.

The authors admit this shortcoming. They point out that ratings and awards are, at best, "imperfect proxies for what we seek to measure." Yet they *are* the measures these authors selected. Doing scientific research requires one to make choices. No doubt, measuring quality can be an art. Often, the categories and standards applied are normative in nature – creating standards for what the audience/public *should* like and *should* be exposed to. When it comes to measuring quality in local news, however, there are far better measures available. In its annual study on local television news, for example, the Project for Excellence in Journalism defines a quality newscast as one that accomplishes seven goals: (1) covers a broad range of topics; (2) focuses on significant aspects of the news; (3) is based on original reporting; (4) provides credible information; (5) uses multiple sources; (6) balances stories with multiple points of view; and (7) contains locally relevant stories ("Gambling with the future," 2001). In this year's study, the researchers examined more than 33,000 stories, gathering information on at least 30 separate variables each ("Local TV News," 2002). Although not nearly so vast as the Columbia University project, other researchers have applied similar quality measures for TV news content (Carroll & Tuggle et al, 1997; Davie & Lee, 1993; Slattery and Hakanen, 1996). One could, for example:

- Count the number of minutes devoted to news (which was applied in this study).
- Count the number of stories unique to that station's newscast ("enterprise reporting").
- Count the amount of news which is locally-produced (versus provided by feed services)
- Count the amount of news in content categories: politics, crime, education, etc.
- Analyze the fairness and balance in individual stories.
- Analyze the diversity of sources and subjects (especially regarding racial/ethnic minorities and other non-majority groups).

Better yet, researchers could talk to the news viewers and see how they define quality. As Lind discovered (1995), viewers can judge quality for themselves and don't particularly want researchers (or the government) to influence their viewing options.

To paint an accurate picture of quality, one must study actual content, which is difficult and time consuming. It is far easier to apply measures which are easily obtainable. This is not to say that ratings and awards do not help researchers gauge quality, just that they are insufficient measures in and of themselves. In addition to using such measures, the authors failed to outline their theoretical underpinnings or hypothesize why they found what they found. The implication of their findings, however, is that deregulation would be good for the "consumer." Information found in the O&O versus affiliates table supports the elimination of a national limit on broadcast ownership (which would clear the way for the networks to purchase more affiliates). Regarding co-owned versus non-co-owned operations, this finding implies the repeal of the cross-ownership ban for broadcast and newspapers would actually result in better quality and quantity of news and public affairs programming for local news viewers. Given the limitations in the data and research design, these findings should be carefully scrutinized before being used to change FCC broadcast regulatory policy.

Consolidation & Substitutability: Diverse Voices & Duopoly

Moving from questions of quality to those of media usage, Study #3 examines *Consumer Substitution Among Media* (Waldfogel, 2002). Waldofgel asked whether the changes in availability or use of some media have brought about changes in consumers' use of other media. In short, he examined whether different media provide the public with information substitutes. According to the author, the question is important because FCC media ownership policies are predicated (to varying degrees) on the extent of substitutability of media for various purposes -- news, entertainment, etc. Using an economic, supply/demand model, this study examined the extent of substitutability across media. The researcher payed particular attention to news.

Ultimately, he observed the number of outlets in each medium (radio, television, cable, daily newspapers, weekly newspapers, and the internet) for 140 Designated Market areas (DMAs). He used these data, combined with individual-level data collected in the nation's top-66 markets,[27] to construct a map of media use. He then used the map to draw "substitution inferences." Although the use of each medium varies depending upon demographics (age, education, gender, race/ethnicity, social class), he reported the following aggregate, descriptive data:

- Daily Papers: 53 percent read a daily paper; 91 percent of those read a news section.
- TV News: The average viewer watches more than 2-and-a-half hours of news per week.
- Cable: 73 percent of households have cable
- Satellite TV: 14 percent of households have satellite television.
- Radio: The average person listens to 2-3 radio stations, the most popular being news/talk/info; one-quarter report getting some news from radio.
- Internet: 56 percent have access at home or at work; 31 percent use it for news.

Next, Waldfogel attempted to determine whether increased use of one medium leads to decreased use of another. Controlling for demographic variables and using a mathematical modeling, he found the clearest evidence of substitution between: (1) broadcast television and the Internet (both overall and for news); (2) daily and weekly newspapers; and (3) daily newspapers and television news. There was also some evidence of substitution between cable and daily newspapers (both overall and for news consumption), between broadcast television and radio (for news), and between the Internet and daily newspapers (for news). He found little or no evidence of substitution between weekly newspapers and television, between radio and Internet, or between radio and cable.

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[27] As provided by Scarborough.

The author pointed out, however, that these data are limited for a number of reasons. First, his methodological approach allowed him to examine only two media at a time. In real world conditions, people normally have several options to choose between. His findings also were based on aggregate data which do not account for individual-level differences. For example, one viewer might watch television for eight hours whereas another watches just two. The viewers average five hours between them, but their media habits are, in fact, quite different. Waldfogel also advised those who read this study to understand that aggregate data "average out" behaviors that may be dependent upon specific news events. For example, in times of war, many people watch more television than in times of peace. According to Waldfogel, instead of being a "fixed condition," media usage varies "in situations where a specific event changes their level of interest in information."[28] This, he argued, may in turn, bring about a change in their use of multiple media. Waldfogel also pointed out that this data cannot necessarily be applied to local news markets because it is based on aggregate national data which includes both large and small market cities. Large markets generally operate differently than small ones, providing (among other things) a larger number of competing news and information outlets of all kinds.

Waldfogel concluded that certain media compete with each other for consumers' attention, providing evidence of substitution by consumers between (and among) certain media outlets. These findings, he argued, raise questions about whether media are sensibly viewed in isolation for policy purposes. He suggested his findings should lead one to reject the view that various media are entirely distinct. He was far more cautious, however, in defending the concept of substitutability as it relates to news. He said his study cannot completely answer the question of whether substitution is sufficiently effective that all media should be considered substitutes for news and information purposes. He admited the idea of substitution is perhaps a somewhat biased measure and that true conditions might be, in fact, "complementary" instead.

The question of substitutability versus "complementarity" is critical. Media may be more or less substitutable depending upon the story. A simple evaluation of one's own media use helps demonstrate the point. If one is trying to find out how the City Council voted on a local noise ordinance, there is little difference between getting that basic information from your local TV station versus your daily papers. The kind of story, however, affects the scope of information needed, and where you can go to find it.

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[28] The author also points out that aggregate data supplied by Scarborough are problematic because, despite their substantial appeal, "consumption data have the drawback that individuals who use one medium heavily may also use others heavily" (p. 25). It is of concern to this researcher that this type of media behavior is depicted as a "drawback." These news or media "junkies," and their habits, should be considered as representative of the scope of media behaviors as individuals who "consume" less.

Following the attacks on the World Trade Centers and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, millions of people turned to their television sets to learn what was happening. Whether they watched via broadcast, cable, or direct satellite, many were "glued to the set" for days and one channel was not enough. Many viewers flipped from the networks or cable news outlets to their local news to find out how the attacks were affecting their own communities. They also turned on their radios and read local newspapers, searching for more details. The daily papers provided a synopsis of the previous day's developments and more concentrated, detailed coverage. With a developing news story like this one, however, the television news coverage added certain vital information to the mix. Information provided via video, for example, could not possibly have been conveyed in print (as in the case of videotapes shot at ground zero). It is not, then, a stretch to assume that consumers might be looking for different sorts of information from different media suppliers, seeing various media as complements rather than substitutes.

There are also difficulties when one tries to apply an economic model such as this one to real-world media conditions. This issue can be demonstrated two different ways. First, one of model's underlying assumptions is that, all prices being equal, "the greater availability of outlets in one medium will reduce the use of the other medium" (p. 8). This suggests a greater number of daily papers will reduce use of television and vice versa. However, availability of resources is only part of the equation. Individual needs, interests, and habits also drive media behavior. Such economic models also become problematic when "cable" is included in the analysis. Waldfogel's data showed that approximately 75 percent of the U.S. population receives cable (p. 14). His supply/demand model assumes that consumer demand for an available product depends on the price of the product *and* whether other products are adequate substitutes. Cable television is not free. As argued previously, a large proportion of the American population does not receive cable (many because they cannot afford it). For these Americans, therefore, cable is not a viable substitute. The same argument can be made for the Internet, which only reaches 56 percent of American adults and also costs money to access.[29]

In addition to cost issues, it is potentially confounding to analyze broadcast television as a medium distinctly separate from cable or direct satellite systems. Can one truly examine these media as being "separate" when it comes to local news? Research shows the economic success of cable and DB systems depends, at least in part, on the inclusion of local broadcast signals (Levy, Ford-Livene, & Levine, 2002, p. 51). Since the majority of locally produced content is "news" and "public affairs," without specific ratings measures of cable or direct satellite use, it is impossible to know how much viewers are relying on these "new media" for locally produced programming.

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[29] Again, this figure is based on access from home or work. It does not include public access at libraries, universities, etc., which is typically provided for free.

Finally, I address the question of substitution among "niche" markets. According to Waldfogel, evidence suggests national newspapers such as the *New York Times* are substitutes for local daily newspapers. He stated, "In markets with greater increases in *Times* circulation, there is a larger decrease in local paper circulation in zip codes containing educated persons targeted by the *Times* (my emphasis). This indicates that national papers are substitutes for local ones" (p. 9). This last statement fails to stipulate the limited nature of such a finding. It is easy to see how some of the more "educated" demographic groups might see the *Times* and their daily paper as substitutes – but only if their corresponding interest in local issues is less than their interest in national or international coverage. In short, this evidence of substitutability fails to address obvious demographic variation (based on age, education, and social class) buried within the data. Regarding another demographic variable, Waldfogel found that minorities (primarily African-Americans), are more likely to use non-local media (such as the Internet or cable television) in markets where they are more "isolated." This does not necessarily imply that the national media are a substitute. Perhaps, lacking media attention in their own markets, they must turn elsewhere to see coverage of issues of importance to their respective groups. This does not suggest that the two are substitutes. One may provide relatively more or less of a certain type of content while the other fills in the gaps.

In conclusion, Waldfogel's study provides important evidence about media use patterns in the United States. As such, it could be useful in the FCC's upcoming regulatory decisions. It is perhaps most practically applied to the "eight voices" debate, in that it supplies some of the empirical evidence called for by the U.S. Court of Appeals (in *Sinclair v. FCC*). The findings are limited, however, by the nature of the data and by theoretical assumptions underlying the data. To reiterate, Waldfogel admits that the idea of substitution is a somewhat biased measure and that true conditions might be, in fact, "complementary" instead. This author goes to great lengths to qualify his results. There is no reason why the FCC should not do the same.

CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS:

Each of the studies analyzed in this paper was designed to generate empirical evidence upon which the FCC can rely to set regulatory policy. Respectively, they have serious implications for the commission's pending decisions on cross-ownership, the national cap, and duopolies. As several researchers noted, the purpose of the FCC's empirical studies is to better understand the consequences of media concentration. The question is, do these studies provide the evidence we need to effectively change policy? When it comes to consolidation's impact on local news, this researcher's answer is a resounding no.

Of greatest concern to this author is the lack of research directly examining the impact of consolidation on television news content. Several studies get close, but are not on target. In Study #2, Pritchard analyzes news coverage of the 2000 Presidential campaign. The author seeks to determine whether newspapers and television newscasts exhibit a collective "slant" when owned by the same company. The normative assumption is that cross-ownership leads to decreasing diversity of opinions. Pritchard concludes, however, that common ownership does not result in a predictable pattern of news coverage. A detailed analysis of his findings suggests otherwise. After re-examining the data using more stringent social-science standards, one finds that in 8 of the 10 cases studied, there is no significant difference between the newspaper's "slant" and the television station's "slant." Contrary to Pritchard's conclusions, this suggests cross-ownership *could* be impacting content.

Of the 12 studies commissioned by the FCC, this was the *only* one to directly examine news content. His research design, however, leaves something to be desired. In his analysis, Pritchard created a measure to compare the similarity of news "slant" among 10 pairs of cross-owned newspapers and television newscasts. He did not, however, have any external data against which to judge these findings. By failing to examine conditions in non-cross-owned pairs, we have no way of knowing whether the distances found here are similar to or different from "slant" in non-consolidated media conditions. His statistical analysis was also highly problematic. As such, this study failed to fully-investigate consolidation's potential effects.

Study #7, conducted by Spavins, Roberts, and Frenette, examined the performance of local television stations owned and operated by national networks versus local stations owned and operated by other companies. They attempted to discover whether the network O&Os produce a higher- or lower-quality news content. Additionally, they examined the impact of cross-ownership on quality. The authors used ratings, awards, and amount of time dedicated to news and public affairs programming as measures of quality. Although they said they found no "meaningful difference" between the performance of O&O and affiliates in the ratings of local evening news, they *did* find O&Os win more awards and produce more news than non-network owned affiliates. They stated their data also indicate that stations co-owned with newspapers offer more quality content and a greater quantity of local news programming than affiliates which are not cross-owned.

Although it examines television news, Study #7 examines neither content nor the actual impact of consolidation. In fairness, it could be argued that amount of time devoted to news is a measure of content. When most media researchers talk about content, however, they are referring to actual elements of news coverage, such as stories, editorials, graphics, etc. Instead, these authors use ratings and awards as implied measures of quality. Given the relevance of their findings to the future of decision-making at the FCC, "implied" doesn't suffice. As discussed earlier, there are many reasons why these measures are inadequate to the task at hand. If the researchers wanted to find evidence of content quality (which was pre-assembled and easy to access), they might have used data from the Project for Excellence in Journalism. For years, scholars at PEJ have analyzed media content across the United States and have a vast database available.

Even if these authors *had* employed other measures, their sample frame does not allow them to accurately study quality in light of consolidation. This study pits ABC, NBC, CBS, and FOX O&Os against affiliates largely owned by media conglomerates. It does not examine what happens to news content when a local television station is purchased by a network or a conglomerate. Nor does it examine what happens to news content when an organization which already owns one station in the market is allowed to buy another (so-called duopolies). These are the questions which the FCC needs answered before making decisions.

Since 1999, the FCC has allowed duopolies under certain limited conditions, but only in cases where eight independent broadcast voices remain in the market. In *Sinclair v. FCC*, the 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals required the FCC to revisit this standard and justify, empirically, the need for eight voices. It is impossible to devise a single study which would definitively answer that question, but several studies in combination might shed more light on the subject. If, for example, researchers were to gather baseline data on news content in a market *before* duopoly conditions were allowed, and then track changes in the news product over time, the resulting evidence would be extremely helpful. This would obviously be a single case study. If the exact same design were employed in multiple markets, and then combined, a more representative picture might emerge. Such an undertaking would involve intense coordination and pre-planning on the part of the FCC and media scholars. It is, however, possible to gather such data – data which would directly address critical issues before the Commission.

Study #3 also directly affects the future of the duopoly dance. But like Study #7, it does not measure either content or consolidation. It simply examined whether the expanding availability of media options provide the public with information substitutes. Using economic modeling, the author finds the "clearest" evidence of substitution between broadcast television and the Internet (both overall and for news), between daily and weekly newspapers, and between daily newspapers and television news. Although Waldfogel acknowledged that substitution may not be the right word, he stipulated that, especially when it comes to news, media may actually compliment each other rather than serve as substitutes.

The concept of substitution, however, plays a crucial part in the FCC's decision about duopolies. The "eight voices" duopoly debate does not only ponder how *many* distinct voices are necessary to lead to a "diverse" marketplace of ideas; the *kind* of voice matters as well. Television regulations require 8 distinct broadcast voices remain in the market before a duopoly would be allowed. The standard is different for radio. According to the Telecommunication Act of 1996, the eight voices do not necessarily have to come over the airwaves. Cable and newspapers also count. This is where the question of substitution comes into play.

In Study #3, Waldfogel said that his findings raise questions about whether regulators should view television, radio, newspapers, or the Internet as entirely distinct media. He provided evidence that certain media compete for consumers' attention, which is no doubt true. With so many options, and only so much time, making choices is required. That does not necessarily lead one to believe that actual *substitution* is going on. Nielsen research shows that more Americans rely on television more than any other medium for both local and national news. When asked: "What sources, if any, have you used in the past seven days for local and current affairs?," 92 percent of respondents reported using television. However, 79 percent said newspapers, 68 percent said radio, 34 percent said Internet, and another 20 percent said magazines. If media were, in fact, substitutable in the public's mind, it is unlikely we would see so much overlap between these media resources. Lastly, if advertisers do not perceive television, radio, newspaper, and cable as substitutes for each other (Bush, 2002), it is unclear why media-makers and scholars would think the public sees them as substitutes. The findings from Study #3, however, are likely to be taken as evidence that a broader standard can be applied when considering what counts as *distinct* in the duopoly, "eight voices" decision.

In summary, none of the studies included in the FCC's 12 examinations looks exactly at the relationship between consolidation and news content in local markets, the markets that we should be most concerned about. As a number of authors point out, many of their findings are based on research collected in large markets. In large markets, individual viewers, readers, and listeners have significantly more media options. In their reliance on large market data, all three studies analyzed here may be overlooking issues which would come to light only if smaller markets were studied. In addition, two of these studies rely heavily on aggregate audience data which have a profound "averaging" effect, making it difficult to see the true scope of actual media behaviors, needs, and desires. In fact, in none of the 12 studies commissioned by the FCC did anyone directly ask the American public about their media substitution habits.

Lack of Public Input and Time:

It is unlikely the public will have a chance to voice its opinions in any meaningful way before the FCC makes its decisions. Although the FCC made the results of these 12 studies available for public comment and analysis, it is difficult to grasp what these findings actually mean, especially if one is not a mathematician, statistician, social scientist, or public policy expert. In addition, most Americans lack access to advanced statistical tools (such as SPSS) which are necessary to sufficiently analyze the underlying data.

Other than written comment, citizens had only one chance to have their views heard. The FCC held an official public hearing in on February 27, 2003 in Richmond, Virginia. During that hearing, fewer than three dozen speakers were allowed to voice their concerns. Each person had less than two minutes to speak. Despite the sweeping implications for media policy and the public at large, this would be the *only* open hearing on the subject. According Chairman Michael Powell, the empirical studies "provide the most important foundation for our decision in a manner that the courts will sustain" ("FCC Chairman"). He contends: "The Commission is committed to developing rules that are internally consistent, tailored to the modern media marketplace and empirically justified. The public interest, and the courts, demand nothing less" (FCC Chairman").

The lack of public input has led to substantial debate among the five commissioners. While welcoming the decision to hold a public hearing, Commissioner Michael Copps (one of two Democrats on panel) argues for more hearings to "flesh out the record needed for this single most important decision the commission will make" in 2003 ("Commissioner Michael Copps," 2002). Jonathan Adelstein also has jumped into the fray. The newly appointed commissioner argued: "These are issues that go to the heart of our democracy – a diversity of voices on the airwaves, localism. We can't do too much reaching out" ("Adelstein eyes," 2002; McClintock, 2002). Adelstein and Copps believe that the FCC should take more time to consider its options and seek more information. Chairman Powell disagrees. While he acknowledges that public input "can provide value to our proceedings," he invokes "severe budget constraints and a commitment not to further delay completion of the critical proceeding" as paramount considerations ("FCC Chairman").

Who stands to lose the most if the FCC were to expand the scope of public hearings and conduct additional research on these vital issues? Commissioner Copps believes that it is the public:

> We've asked the public to analyze six separate media consolidation rules. We've asked them to sift through twelve studies that many groups claim are inadequate. We've asked them to suggest what other areas of this issue need to be explored. And we've asked them to do all this in a media landscape that has changed dramatically over the past decade. Yet we provide a mere 60 days to do this. (Commissioner Michael Copps Expresses 'Alarm'," 2002)

A growing number of groups are speaking out. A coalition of more than 30 consumer, civil rights, low income, senior citizen, and minority organizations recently released a statement criticizing the FCC's policy to allow media mergers and acquisitions (Ho, 2002; "Public Opinion," 2002). The Consumer

Federation of America, the Consumer's Union, the Center for Digital Democracy, and the Media Access Project are among the most vocal opponents of this deregulatory trend. CFA's director of research questions the quality of the studies and contends that Chairman Powell is more interested in "promoting variety in the entertainment market" than diversity on the public airwaves ("Public Opinion."). They point out that the studies themselves, as well as the lack of public comment, leave far too many questions unanswered. Commissioner Copps points out that the FCC is "under no mandate to resolve these issues by a date certain. We must place making the right decision ahead of making a hasty decision." In fact, the courts have not asked the FCC to complete its analysis within any particular time frame.

The Rush to Judgment: A New Time-"Frame"

So why the rush to judgment? A number of the FCC-commissioned studies cite the need for decisions to be made quickly based on changing market conditions. More than ever before, broadcasters are competing for audiences. Technological advances have produced new competitors, including cable, Internet, and digital satellite providers. Large sums of money are at stake. In light of this growing competition, the entire frame of the debate has largely shifted from one of public interest to one of market conditions. In reviewing the 12 studies, I found very few instances where the words "public" or "public interest" even appeared (although the concept of "diversity of voices" was mentioned in several cases as justification for conducting the analysis). People are not only viewers, readers, or listeners. They also are media consumers. Media "deliver" audiences to advertisers and "penetrate" markets. News and information programs are now called "the product." Researchers are applying supply/demand models in their analysis of "consumer behavior."

The market economy model has moved center-stage in the media policy debate. The FCC's own research, however, demonstrates that economic conditions are not nearly as desperate as broadcasters might have us believe. According to Study #12, broadcast television is a *Survivor in a Sea of Competition* (Levy, Ford-Livene, Levine, 2002). Technological advances and competitive pressures are clearly affecting the financial bottom line of media owners. Audiences are fragmenting. People are turning toward new technologies for their news and entertainment programming. Yet Levy et al show "market penetration" is leveling off for cable and direct broadcast systems (p.1) and they find broadcasters still reach vast audiences compared to cable (p. 18). Profit margins may be shrinking, but advertising revenues have remained relatively strong and were stronger than expected in 2001 (p. 18). Contrary to the doomsday projections published in one of their previous reports, the authors find that the broadcast media are actually doing quite well. They also stand to do even better in the future once they find a way to harness new digital and Internet technologies for their own use (and for the benefit of their viewers)(p. 95). In short, these authors argue that the popularity of cable and other competing technologies over broadcast will likely lead to changes that are "evolutionary not revolutionary" (p. 44).

FCC Decisions & the Future: A Call for More Research

Broadcast owners do not appear to be in dire financial straits. Given the deficiencies in the empirical data in these 12 studies, and the public interests at stake, this researcher suggests that the FCC proceed with extreme caution, especially regarding regulations that potentially affect news content, including cross-ownership, the national cap, and duopolies. There still is much critical information to be gathered. Each of the FCC-commissioned studies contributes to the debate, but even these findings conflict. Six of them directly or indirectly support deregulation (Brown & Williams, 2002; Pritchard; Roberts, Frenette, & Stearns; Spavins, Denison & Frenette; Waldfogel; William, Roberts, & Alexander, 2002). Four suggest that deregulation has had a deleterious effect and/or that the time is not necessarily ripe for change (Bush, 2002; Cunningham & Alexander; Einstein, 2002; Levy, Ford-Livene, & Levine). Another two appear to be neutral ("Consumer Survey"; Williams & Roberts, 2002).

Still, as most of these authors point out in their respective studies, numerous questions remain and further research is necessary. Several of these studies could be conducted again with methodological revisions (applying the critique above). Scholars and policy experts need to determine appropriate measures of quality and employ various methodological approaches to assess the media's messages and community impact in a more complete way. Empirical evidence also might fruitfully be found by applying some of the approaches within the radio marketplace studies already commissioned by the FCC. In 1996, the Telecommunications Act eliminated radio ownership's national cap and significantly reduced local market concentration rules. Duopoly rules were just revised in 1999. This means that radio has a three-year head start on deregulation. It also means that researchers have had more time to assess the impact. The FCC's studies on radio diversity demonstrate the sorts of questions that need to be asked about television news. For example, Williams & Roberts studied the impact of deregulation on certain radio formats (a measure of diversity). Williams, Brown & Alexander conducted an interesting analysis of diversity among radio play lists. Both analyses might help point television researchers in the right direction.

In regard to duopolies, which went inexplicably unexamined in these analyses, the FCC also might consider deregulation, but only in cases where researchers are positioned (in advance) to gather necessary data. For example, the FCC could allow additional duopolies in a limited number of cases on the condition that owners open their doors to researchers, who could then conduct detailed content analyses before and after the sales are completed. Audience surveys could be conducted to ask viewers in markets where duopolies exist what changes they perceive. Researchers could gather data on the decline, if any, of newscasts in communities where duopolies currently exist. To date, this evidence is largely anecdotal but it could become relevant, empirically, if researchers ask the right questions.

Many of the studies suggested here, if properly conducted, *could* provide the empirical evidence the FCC needs to allow further deregulation. Clearly, there is a need to balance competitive concerns with public interest. We know that broadcasters stand to benefit from a change in ownership rules and regulations. Until more research is conducted, however, it is impossible to know whether the public will benefit as well.

IN WHOSE BEST INTEREST? FCC Deregulation & Local News: How Cross-Ownership, National Caps, and Duopolies are addressed in Three Commissioned Studies

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Radio-TV

Remembering the news: The effect of chronological presentation of information on memory for broadcast news

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Remembering the news: The effect of chronological presentation of information on memory for broadcast news

ABSTRACT:

This experiment tested the hypothesis that presenting a television news story in chronological style will produce greater cued recall than presenting the same story in broadcast style. Subjects viewed a newsbrief containing two target stories.Those who saw the stories in chronological style scored slightly higher on a cued recall test than those who saw the same stories in traditional broadcast style.The difference in recall was statistically significant for one of the target stories.

Remembering the news: The effect of chronological presentation of information on memory for television news

Television news has enjoyed a steadily growing affection in the hearts of the information seeking public. Comstock and Scharrer (1999) report nearly three-fourths of those surveyed count TV among their primary sources of news, while only 38% included newspapers among their primary sources. The authors report the highest rankings (since surveys of media consumers began) for television as the most credible, most rapid, most complete and comprehensive news source. Parallel to the popularity reports, however, is an extensive body of research suggesting that an affinity for television news does not translate automatically into learning from it, that is, being able to remember the information. Reeves and Thorson (1986) point out that the complexity of television messages makes pinpointing the exact reason why viewers have difficulty recalling what they see and hear "difficult if not impossible" (p.349). Nonetheless, researchers have explored a wide range of factors that may explain why viewers have trouble remembering the news. Gunter (1987) suggests that the pace of television news is too fast to allow effective cognitive processing. Stauffer, Frost, & Rybolt (1983) argue that TV news fails to provide sufficient background information or links to prior knowledge to facilitate construction of memory. Wetzel, Radtke, and Stern (1994) conclude that the short duration of visuals, the weak correspondence between visual and verbal information, and the brevity of broadcast stories work against the viewer's ability to recall the news. Walma Van Der Molen and Van Der Voort (April, 2000) found evidence for better recall of television news by children and adults when the visual and verbal information is redundant. In a similar vein, Brosius, Donsbach, and Birk (1996) suggest that retention of news content would be facilitated if the visual images used correspond to specific verbal information in a television news story. Coldevin (1975) found that longer messages, which provided more learning opportunities through repetition and review of information, produced better memory.

Lang (1989) suggests that the verbal structure of television news stories is at the heart of the problem. She found that viewer recall was enhanced by presenting the information in chronological rather than typical broadcast news form, which tends to present the facts in order of importance or recency. Lang found the effect by simply rearranging the sentences of a broadcast style story into chronological order. She suggests that "actually developing a style of writing and presentation that would maximize the chronological nature of news might have even greater effects on the viewer's ability to recall information in a newscast" (Lang, p.450). This study is a modified replication of Lang's experiment using a more refined chronological style, to test whether temporal presentation of information will significantly increase recall of television news.

Theory

Researchers have focused a great deal of attention on the relationship between the order in which information is presented and a reader's or viewer's ability to process and recall that information. McShane (1991) reports that children and adults recall print information more effectively when the text is temporally organized. Wright, Huston, Ross, Calvert, Rolandelli, Weeks, Raessi, and Potts (1984) found that both attention and recall are better for television stories presented in chronological or causal (temporal) form. In addition, Zelinski, Light, and Gilewski (1984), Tun (1989), Mandler (1979), and Rumelhart and Ortony (1977) found that adults recall print information better in narrative (story) form than in expository (categorical or hierarchical) form.

Mandler (1979) reports that children and adults found categorically organized print information more difficult because it requires a form of data-driven, bottom-up processing to identify the hierarchical structure of the information, whereas a narrative can be processed more easily, using previously stored schemata (narratives). Brown and Smiley (1977) and Rumelhart and

Ortony (1977) support the contention that schemata are automatically tapped to help us understand and remember stimuli we encounter, and the narrative schema (information or events stored in temporal order) is most easily applied to incoming stimuli.

How do these findings relate to television news? Keller and Hawkins (2002) identify three forms of information presentation (styles) in TV news: chronological, present-past-future (cause/effect organization), and main point (equivalent to inverted pyramid in print with information presented in descending order of importance, hierarchical). In effect, both chronological and present-past-future style news stories adopt a temporal organization of information. Based on the findings cited above, TV news stories written in temporal form (chronological, present-past-future) should be easier to process and remember than main point form. But main point form is, arguably, the most common style utilized by broadcasters. Kelley (2002) found that 62% of stories in an adult newscast were in main point form, while 50% of stories in newscasts produced for children and adolescents were in main point form. If information processing theorists are correct, more than half of the stories presented in a television newscast are produced in a manner that complicates viewers' efforts to process and remember the information.

Lang (1989) taps similar research to support her hypothesis that news stories in chronological rather than typical broadcast form should be more memorable. She argues that the style in which the story is written influences how deeply the viewer is able to process it. Assuming that most viewers expect to expend little effort in consuming the news (even though they list it as a main source of information) she suggests that the result is low attention and incomplete, low-level processing, leading to "levels of learning and memory for the information in the newscast [that] are quite low" (Lang, p.442). She argues that basic broadcast style (main point or hierarchical form) demands more effort to process than the average viewer is likely to expend. Assuming broadcasters cannot control viewing strategies employed by their audience, Lang proposes changing the product, presenting information in chronological order to make it easier to process.

Theories of how we process information (stimuli) and form memory support this idea. Thorson and Friestad (1989) theorize that all information is originally input as episodes. Tulving (1983) defines this first stage, episodic memory, as the system that receives and stores information about temporally dated episodes or events, and the tempero-spatial relations among them. Ortony (1978) and Wyer and Bodenhausen (1985) emphasize that the representation of episodes we experience, in episodic memory, approximates the order in which the stimuli were received. According to Ortony (1978), the brain taps prior knowledge (memory, both episodic and semantic) to comprehend the incoming information and constructs a representation (subgraph) of the episode that includes the new information and elements of all of the previously stored concepts activated in understanding it. Ortony theorizes that the subgraph is "entered into episodic memory as a record of the experienced meaning of the input" (p.58). Thorson and Friestad (1989) suggest that these subgraphs undergo certain mental operations (classification, judgment, comparison of contents) before moving into semantic or long-term memory (knowledge of the world, stripped of the particularities of time and place associated with perception of the original stimuli).

Thorson and Friestad (1989) caution that "if episodes are not immediately processed semantically, it is important to optimize the strength of the episodic traces to enhance the likelihood of their availability for processing later" (p. 310). (Tulving (1983) coins the term engram to refer to a memory trace, and defines it as the product of encoding, i.e., the difference between the state of the memory system before and after encoding an event.) Lang (1989) lists several factors that may influence the intensity of episodic memory traces: intensity of the experience, subjective importance of the experience, emotional content of the experience, completeness of the episodic trace, and the temporal ordering of the experience. She suggests that a television news story written in chronological style would reduce the amount of effort needed to process it by decreasing the viewer's need to access semantic memory, increase memory trace strength, and thus, increase the likelihood of remembering the information in the story. In a test of her reasoning (Lang, 1989), she found limited support for the positive effect of chronological style on recall of information, and found strong support for the positive effect of chronological style on the accuracy of recall. Lang points out that she intentionally created a rough-hewn chronological version by simply rearranging the facts in a story, and predicts that a more effectively constructed narrative might produce a stronger effect. We find no evidence that anyone has followed through on that challenge. On the strength of Lang's findings and the research and theory cited here, this study was designed to fill the void.

With regard to the effect of the style in which a TV news story is written on the amount of information a viewer can recall after being exposed to it, we offer the following hypothesis:

H1: Viewers who watch a television news story presented in chronological form will remember more facts than viewers who watch the same story presented in broadcast form.

The hypothesis is based on the findings of McShane (1991), Wright, Huston, Ross, Calvert, Rolandelli, Weeks, Raessi, and Potts (1984), Zelinski, Light, and Gilewski (1984), Tun (1989), Mandler (1979), and Rumelhart and Ortony (1977) who found that adults and children recall information better when it's presented in narrative (story) form rather than in expository (categorical or hierarchical) form. The hypothesis further taps the theoretical work of Tulving (1983) and others who theorize that information is processed episodically (temporally) before entering into semantic or long-term memory. In addition, the hypothesis is built on Lang's (1989) argument that chronological presentation of information in a television news story reduces the effort needed to process it and is, therefore, likely to increase memory trace strength and enhance recall.

Method

Design

The study is designed as a modified replication of the experiment conducted by Lang (1989). It required subjects to watch an approximately six-minute-20 second newscast containing 10 stories originally aired by a local television station and one 30-second commercial. Two of the stories were selected as target stories. They were presented in the treatments in either their original broadcast style or rewritten in chronological style.

The hypothesis was tested using a mixed model 2 (Style) X 2 (Topic) X 4 (Order) factorial design. Between subjects factors were style and order. The within subjects factor was topic.

The style factors were broadcast (stories presented in the form in which they originally aired) and chronological (stories rewritten to present the information in time order). The two levels of topic consisted of two different target stories. One dealt with a trip to the international space station by a space shuttle crew. The other dealt with a record-setting performance by a group of female skydivers. The target stories were chosen because they were judged to be of some interest to college-age student subjects, were approximately the same length, and contained nearly equal amounts of information. The order factor has four levels designed to control for the order in which the target stories were presented to the subjects.

All of the stories used in the newscast were transcribed from videotape recordings of the original broadcasts. A male professional news anchor for a local television station[1] agreed to record the script for the treatments. The four conditions were then edited together by the author. The video originally aired with the stories was inserted in all stories except the target stories, which were presented as "talking head" only to control for the effect of visuals on memory. All four treatments began with an on-camera greeting from the anchor, followed by an airport emergency landing story followed by a story on Iraq. The target stories were inserted in the third and fourth positions as follows: Treatment 1 (broadcast style with the shuttle story before the skydiver story), Treatment 2 (broadcast style with the skydiver story before the shuttle story), Treatment 3 (chronological style with the shuttle story before the skydiver story), Treatment 4 (chronological style with the skydiver story before the shuttle story). After the target stories, the four treatments were identical. The order of presentation was: credit card theft story, 30-second commercial for a supermarket, weather (with graphic elements shown full screen), three sports stories, and a kicker (the amusing little anecdote often used to close a newscast and leave viewers with a smile). An attempt was made to present the stories as they would appear if read by an anchor in an actual broadcast, thus they varied in length from approximately 15 seconds to one minute. Each target story ran 30 seconds.

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[1] The author extends thanks to Kevin Shenk, weekend anchor and reporter for WSTM-TV in Syracuse, New York for volunteering to assist in preparation of the treatments for this experiment.

To limit the "story telling" effect on subject's memory for the information, Lang (1989) simply rearranged the sentences into chronological order, maintaining the exact words employed in the broadcast versions of the target stories. In this study, all of the facts were retained, but the copy was rewritten in more conventional narrative style to eliminate the awkwardness introduced by simply rearranging the sentences. (see Appendix A).

Procedure

Subjects were 70 undergraduate communication students from Syracuse University (mean age = 19.64, SD = .72) who volunteered to participate in exchange for extra credit. Students were randomly assigned to groups of approximately 20 and treatments were randomly assigned to the groups. Participants viewed the videotaped treatments while seated at tables in a roughly 20 X 25 foot classroom. The treatments were edited on DVC-PRO format tapes and projected on a large screen at the front of the room, which afforded all participants a clear view of the presentation. Subjects were instructed to watch the newscast.

Immediately after seeing the newscast, subjects were asked to complete a cued recall test for the two target stories. The test consisted of ten questions, five for each target story. The questions were in multiple choice form, with three options available for each question. Lang (1989) used free recall to test for the amount of information subjects remembered, and cued recall (multiple choice questions) to test for the accuracy of memory. This study chose to employ only aided recall measures, based on the work of Berry (1983) and Woodall, David, and Sahin (1983). Knowing if a viewer has learned the information in a newscast and can retrieve it in a subsequent relevant context (cue) would seem more closely connected to the real world than whether she or he can pull up a list of facts in limbo. Berry supports the use of cued recall in laboratory experiments, saying such tests "remain of importance in providing estimates of levels of optimal performance in registering information at first learning" (p. 362). Woodall and colleagues suggest that "multiple choice questions whose phrasing includes episodic retrieval cues, and whose items focus on news event details could be developed to measure memory. One of the main ways of measuring depth of processing may be multiple choice questions" (p. 21-22). Given the importance of memory trace strength pointed out by Lang and others, cued recall using multiple choice questions may be one of the best ways to measure the effect that has most meaning for news consumers.

Results

Hypothesis 1 states that viewers who watched a television news story presented in chronological form will remember more facts than viewers who watch the same story presented in broadcast form. Independent samples t-tests showed no significant difference in recall across the story order factor, which allowed the broadcast and chronological conditions to be combined into two groups (for broadcast style, n = 34; for chronological style, n = 36). The independent samples t-test for style was not statistically significant, therefore not supporting the hypothesis. But the result was in the direction of the hypothesis. Those who viewed the stories in chronological style had a mean recall of 5.83 (SD = 1.40) facts out of a possible ten, while those who viewed the stories in broadcast style had a mean recall of 5.76 (SD = 1.88) facts out of a possible ten. Given the direction of the results, it was decided to test the stories individually. For the skydiver story, mean recall for those who viewed the chronological style (n = 36) was 3.44 (SD = .81)facts out of a possible five, while those who viewed the story in broadcast style (n = 34) had a mean recall of 2.94 (SD = .95) facts out of a possible five. The result of the independent samples t-test was statistically significant (*p*<.02, one-tailed), therefore supporting the hypothesis.

For the shuttle story, mean recall for the story in chronological style (n = 36) was 2.39 (SD = 1.34), while mean recall for the story in broadcast style (n = 34) was 2.82 (SD = 1.31). The result of the independent samples t-test was not significant, therefore not supporting the hypothesis.

Discussion

Lang (1989) predicted that viewers of a well-written chronological style television news story would have significantly better recall of the facts in that story than those who viewed the same story in traditional broadcast (main point) style. This study, using two target stories, did not find a significant main effect for style, but the result was in the hypothesized direction. Analysis of the stories individually did show a significant main effect of chronological style on recall for the skydiver story, but not for the shuttle story.

It is interesting to note that recall was higher for the skydiver story across all four conditions (see Table 1). Lang (1989) also found differential recall for the two target stories, and considers that no surprise. It's not clear in this study whether the difference is due to the topics chosen or might be attributable to the way the stories were written.

Lang found limited support for the hypothesis that chronological presentation produces greater recall of information, using stories with sentences originally written in broadcast style presented in chronological order. This study, utilizing stories rewritten in chronological style, found a main effect for style in cued recall of one target story (skydiver), and no significant difference in cued recall for the second target story (shuttle). That would seem to provide some confirmation of Lang's (1989) prediction that chronological presentation of information can increase memory for TV news.

The implication, as Lang (1989) suggests, is that broadcast news writers might be advised to considering presenting their facts in chronological style. Such advice is not foreign to those who write instructional texts for broadcast journalism students (Keller and Hawkins, 2002; Mayeux, 2000; Shook,1996; Stephens,1993). These authors all suggest that chronological style may be effective, especially with hard news stories (accidents, crimes, disasters). Tuggle, Carr, and Huffman (2001) come closer to the suggestion being made here. They conclude that "usually the best way to relate a story is to tell it the way it happened, in chronological order, preferably through the eyes of the central character" (p. 38). The authors do not explain the theoretical basis for the recommendation, saying simply that chronological form is easier to comprehend.

But students convinced by such advice are likely to face pressure to write in traditional broadcast style when they enter the industry. Kelley (2002) found that 62% of adult stories and 50% of children's stories were in broadcast form.

This study is limited by the fact that it was conducted in a laboratory setting, where many of the common distractions present when viewers watch TV news were eliminated. Projection of the findings is also limited by the use of university students beginning communication-related studies. Attempting the same experiment using subjects more representative of the general population, in a more naturalistic setting, would provide a clearer indication of the effect of chronological presentation of information on memory. The effect may also have been influenced by the topics selected for use as target stories. This group of subjects clearly remembered the facts about the skydiver story better than the shuttle story. Perhaps, as the broadcast journalism textbook authors suggest, some stories are better suited to chronological style than others. And it may be that the attempt to rewrite the stories in chronological style was more successful for the skydiver story than the shuttle story.

All of these limitations suggest avenues for further research. In addition, the length of the stories may have played a role. Lang (1989) does not specify the length of her target stories, but the length of her treatments, approximately 15 minutes for a total of 10 stories, introduces the possibility that each of the target stories may have been at least 60 seconds long. Coldevin (1975) found that longer stories resulted in greater recall, possibly because more time permits repetition of the information. Conducting the same experiment, with longer, effectively written chronological stories might enhance the effect.

This study also differed from Lang's in that she positioned the target stories in the middle of the newscast separated by non-target stories, while the target stories in this study ran mid-newscast, back-to-back. It would be interesting to know how these target stories would perform if positioned differently. Lang (1989) also suggests testing chronological order in conjunction with other variables thought to influence recall: emotion, bias, intensity of experience, attention, and production variables such as graphics and video. Given the complex model of influences on recall of television news, studies designed to explore these variables in combination would seem to be a way to advance the information processing theory that underlies this experiment. Such explorations would also produce additional direction for television newscasters committed to truly informing their viewers.

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Table 1. Means and standard deviations for story recall variables.

Variables	Mean[1]	Std. Deviation	N
Skydiver story			
(Broadcast style)			
shuttle-skydiver*	3.00	.97	16
skydiver-shuttle*	2.89	.96	18
(Chronological style)			
shuttle-skydiver*	3.00	.74	12
skydiver-shuttle*	3.67	.76	24
Shuttle story			
(Broadcast style)			
shuttle-skydiver*	2.94	1.24	16
skydiver-shuttle*	2.72	1.41	18
(Chronological style)			
shuttle-skydiver*	2.33	1.07	12
skydiver-shuttle*	2.42	1.47	24

[1] Respondents were given a cued recall test consisting of ten multiple choice questions, five for each target story. The means reported here are for individual target stories.

* Indicates order in which target stories were presented.

Appendix A
Target story forms:

SHUTTLE
Broadcast style

TONIGHT IN EARTH ORBIT, THE SPACE SHUTTLE ATLANTIS IS SAFELY DOCKED WITH THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION.THE SHUTTLE AND CREW FINALLY TAKING OFF TODAY, BRINGING A 390 MILLION DOLLAR ADDITION TO THE EVERGROWING SPACE STATION.THE CREW IS RELIEVING THE ASTRONAUTS WHO'VE BEEN ABOARD THE SPACE STATION THESE LAST FOUR MONTHS.THE CREW HAD TO BE VERY CAREFUL. WHEN THEY'RE DOCKING THEY'RE MOVING AT ABOUT ONE INCH PER SECOND.

Chronological style

THE SPACE SHUTTLE ATLANTIS AND CREW TOOK OFF TODAY, HEADING FOR THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION. WHEN THEY ARRIVED, THE CREW HAD TO BE VERY CAREFUL. THEY'RE MOVING AT ABOUT ONE INCH PER SECOND AS THEY DOCK WITH THE STATION. THE PROCEDURE WAS ACCOMPLISHED SAFELY. THE SHUTTLE AND STATION ARE ORBITING THE EARTH TOGETHER TONIGHT. THE SHUTTLE CREW IS RELIEVING THE ASTRONAUTS WHO'VE BEEN ABOARD THE SPACE STATION FOR FOUR MONTHS.THE NEW CREW TOOK WITH THEM A 390 MILLION DOLLAR ADDITION TO THE EVER-GROWING SPACE STATION.

SKYDIVERS
Broadcast style

A COUPLE OF NEW WORLD RECORDS HAVE FALLEN INTO PLACE.
THANKS TO 131 WOMEN JUMPING FOR THE CAUSE THIS PAST WEEKEND...SETTING A WOMEN'S FREE-FALL SKYDIVING WORLD RECORD...WHILE AT THE SAME TIME RAISING CLOSE TO 400-THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR BREAST CANCER RESEARCH. THE WOMEN FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD PRACTICED FOR A WEEK AND IT REALLY PAID OFF. THEY WERE ABLE TO CREATE THEIR FORMATION AND HOLD IT FOR 10-POINT-7 SECONDS...ABOUT THREE TIMES WHAT THEY NEEDED.

Chronological style

A COUPLE OF NEW WORLD RECORDS HAVE FALLEN INTO PLACE.ONE HUNDRED-31 WOMEN... FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD... PRACTICED SKYDIVING FOR A WEEK. THEN, THIS PAST WEEKEND, THEY WERE ABLE TO CREATE THEIR FORMATION AND HOLD IT FOR 10-POINT-7 SECONDS. THAT'S ABOUT THREE TIMES WHAT THEY NEEDED TO SET THE WOMEN'S FREE-FALL SKYDIVING WORLD RECORD. AT THE SAME TIME, THEY RAISED CLOSE TO 400-THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR BREAST CANCER RESEARCH.

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Running Head: JOB SATISFACTION

Radio-TV

Job Satisfaction of Newsmagazine Correspondents
Compared to Regular News Correspondents

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Abstract

Ratings for television news shows have gone down in the last few years, but ratings for the newsmagazine shows seem to be holding steady. The question is, how does this affect the job satisfaction of regular news and newsmagazine correspondents? This paper examines any differences in job satisfaction levels between these groups. It found that newsmagazine correspondents are satisfied with their jobs and are significantly more satisfied than the regular news correspondents. Regular news correspondents report significantly more instances of budgetary constraints affecting their job satisfaction than do newsmagazine correspondents.

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Job Satisfaction of Newsmagazine Correspondents
Compared to Regular News Correspondents

Ever since 60 Minutes went on the air more than 30 years ago, the viewing public and the network brass have become more enamored with the newsmagazine. Don Hewitt, creator and executive producer of 60 Minutes, said a newsmagazine can be "a magnificent blend of great entertainment and worthwhile journalism" (1998, p. 1). However, he said the proliferation of newsmagazines on the airwaves is not because the networks want to better inform the public, but because they want to make money. Newsmagazines are cheaper to produce than the entertainment offerings that they replace. Grossman (1999) said the way that news is perceived by management is different than it was in the past: "Being entertaining and profitable rather than being informative has become the new measure of their success" (p. 58).

Newsmagazine correspondents have more time to prepare and deliver their stories than do correspondents for nightly news shows, plus they get their stories hyped during other network entertainment programming (Turner & Hosenball, 1998). The ratings for most newsmagazines are higher than for the regular news shows ("Network Primetime Averages," 2003) and more people are getting the information about what is happening in the world from other sources than Tom Brokaw or Dan Rather (Gralnick, 2002). Fewer regular news correspondents exist around the globe or around the country (Gralnick, 2002) and those who do, are existing on less money (Foote, 1998). On the other hand, newsmagazines seem to have all of the money they need to create their stories (Hewitt, 1998). How do these factors affect the job satisfaction for all of these correspondents?

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The purpose of this study was to determine the job satisfaction of network television newsmagazine correspondents for programs such as 60 Minutes, 20/20 and Dateline. The results of this study will be compared to those from a 1999 survey of the correspondents for the regular news offerings of ABC, CBS, CNN, NBC and PBS. This paper will give an overview of job satisfaction, budgetary problems at the network news level, and a background of newsmagazines. It will conclude with some differences between regular news and newsmagazine correspondents and how these differences may affect the news that is seen in the future.

Job Satisfaction Literature

Locke (1976) defined a job as "a complex interrelationship of tasks, roles, responsibilities, interactions, incentives, and rewards" (p. 1301). Job satisfaction was studied originally because of a presumed relationship between cost reductions and employee productivity, reduced absences, turnover, and other factors (Smith, 1992). Because there is a strong correlation between job satisfaction and turnover, as well as between job satisfaction and absenteeism, organizations that want to reduce those problems would pay attention to how their workers perceived their jobs (Lawler & Porter, 1976). From an employee's standpoint, job satisfaction is "a pleasurable or positive emotional state from the appraisal of one's job or experiences" (Locke, 1976, p. 1297). People want their jobs to help them attain their desires, such as an exciting and comfortable life and a sense of accomplishment (George & Jones, 1996).

Overall job satisfaction in the United States has been quite high. A 1997 Wall Street Journal/NBC News poll showed that 84% of Americans surveyed liked their jobs.

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Only 4% were completely dissatisfied (Graham, 1997). Of the factors reported to make a person satisfied, 36% admitted they stayed at their job because of money, but 55% said the most important thing was "the chance to use their talents and make a difference" (Graham, 1997, p. R4). Comparably, Weaver and Wilhoit (1986) found that in a nationwide survey of more than 1,000 journalists, 40% of them rated themselves as very satisfied with their jobs, 44% were fairly satisfied, 15% somewhat dissatisfied, and 2% very dissatisfied. However, when Weaver and Wilhoit (1996) replicated their study ten years later, they found the percentages had declined to 27% who were very satisfied, 50% who were fairly satisfied, 20% who were somewhat dissatisfied, and 3% who were very dissatisfied. These data suggest that journalists as a group were somewhat less satisfied than the average American worker. Television journalists were the least happy, with only 19% reporting that they were very satisfied.

Weaver and Wilhoit (1996) reported that the most important job aspects to television journalists were (in rank order) the importance of helping people, editorial policy, job security, a chance to get ahead (promotional opportunities) and autonomy. More than one-fourth of television journalists stated that intrinsic interest or challenge gave them positive feelings about their jobs. The factors that contributed to dissatisfaction with their jobs were management policies, low salaries and inadequate opportunity for advancement.

Budgetary problems at the network news level

Weaver and Wilhoit (1996) found that more than 70% of the journalists they surveyed worked in newsrooms that were group-owned, and 50% worked for companies

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that were publicly traded on the stock exchange. These companies demand that news organizations be profitable. Because television news stories can cost thousands of dollars to produce, most regular news correspondents need to consider the budget before they even think about suggesting a story (Roger O'Neil, NBC correspondent, personal communication, March 1, 1999).

Such pre-examination of budgetary costs did not occur at the television news networks thirty years ago. Foote (1998) divides the first half-century of network television news into two eras: the loss-leader years 1950-1979 and the profit center years 1980-1999. He describes this first period as the "glory days" because "budgets were flush, network news was growing in stature and popularity, and there were only three competitors to serve a huge domestic market" (p. 2). During this time network news lost money, but was considered a necessary item in the network budget because the entire organization's credibility was built on the reputation of its news organization.

The Communications Act of 1934 governed television through the creation of the Federal Communications Commission. The phrase "public interest, convenience and necessity" appears throughout the act as the "ultimate yardstick by which all of the FCC's different regulatory functions and responsibilities are to be guided" (Paglin, 1989, p. 14). The heads of the networks in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s took the public interest aspect seriously. The networks' entertainment fare may have catered to the masses, but the news divisions informed the public and gave the companies prestige (Paley, 1977). The news divisions were the networks' crown jewels (Paley, 1977) and the evening news programs were the flagship broadcasts, the identity of the network (Amos, 1997).

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Jim Bittermann, a former ABC, NBC, and current CNN correspondent, has spent nearly 20 years covering international stories from his base in Paris. Bittermann wrote that when he worked for NBC in the 1970s, considerations were different:

> Until 1985, I can't ever remember having had a discussion with a producer or an executive producer about the costs involved in covering a story. We just didn't think about it. When the money pressures came, things started changing. How much is it going to cost? How many camera days are we going to spend? Can we deliver a story in just two days rather than three days? (Foote, 1998, p. 108).

By then, the business of broadcast news had changed. By 1986, all three networks had been purchased by even larger corporations. Capital Cities purchased ABC in January, 1986, for $3.375 billion (Moody's Industrial Manual, 1988). General Electric acquired NBC's parent company, RCA, in 1986 for $6.4 billion in cash (Moody's Industrial Manual, 1988). Laurence Tisch of Loews swallowed CBS piece by piece. He began buying stock in July 1985; by September 1986, he and his company owned 25% and he was made CBS president (Auletta, 1991).

The idea that journalism was a public service went by the wayside when news started to make money (Foote, 1998). Former Chicago Tribune editor Jim Squires said the move from family ownership to corporate ownership of media organizations changed the focus of the business:

> "The old guys were paid like others in their community, but they measured their self-worth by winning the respect of their peers," he says. "The new guys do the same things but their peers are CEOs at companies like Continental Can. . . . The old owners got their highs from Pulitzers and reporters flocking to work for them.

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> The new guys get their highs from money and stock growth"(Shepard, 1996, p. 19).

Background of newsmagazines

The first newsmagazine was 60 Minutes, which debuted in 1968 on CBS (Hewitt, 1998). More recently, the focus on money has affected the way that news is produced, making newsmagazines a more tempting fare than regular news productions. Grossman (1999) said producing stories that "touch your life" is cheaper than covering world news:

> The latter requires an army of reporters, producers, editors, researchers, and news crews; a multitude of domestic and foreign bureaus, and news desks staffed around the clock. Newsmagazines, on the other hand, are the least expensive of all the networks' prime-time programs to produce. The average newsmagazine costs about $500,000 an hour, compared with $800,000 to $1,000,000 or more a half-hour for sitcoms and dramas (p. 58).

Don Hewitt, 60 Minutes' creator and executive producer, said he feels that he is partially at fault for this change in focus. "We were the ones who turned TV news into a gold mine. And now, to many of the TV newsmagazines that followed in our footsteps, being a gold mine is what they go to sleep every night praying about" (p. 6).

Because entertainment programs are so expensive to produce and may not even last long on the air if they are produced, network presidents have found that newsmagazines are a more inexpensive and reliable alternative (Turner & Hosenball, 1998). The general content can range from important topics such as the Irish Republican Army and Middle East peace (Grossman, 1999) to more sensational fare, such as interviews with celebrities or exploding trucks (Turner & Hosenball, 1998). According to the web sites of ABC, CBS, and NBC, newsmagazines are on nearly every night of the week and some days have more than one show (www.abcnews.go.com; www.cbs.com; www.msnbc.com, 2003).

However, not everyone believes that newsmagazines are successful in every area. Newsmagazine and other news programs have a tendency to attract older viewers that are not as valuable to advertisers as are the younger viewers (Potter, 2002). Nightline was nearly cut from the ABC lineup (Potter, 2002). CNN had tried to do a newsmagazine called NewsStand that combined news and entertainment. However, it got pre-empted so many times for breaking news that it did not develop a following (Katz, 1999). But even with their problems, newsmagazines are not likely to go away anytime soon.

Hypotheses

Based on the literature for the study, the following hypotheses are offered:

H1: Newsmagazine correspondents will be satisfied with their jobs.

H2A: Newsmagazine correspondents will be more satisfied with their jobs than regular news correspondents as measured by responses to a job satisfaction question.

H2B: Newsmagazine correspondents will be more satisfied with their jobs than regular news correspondents as measured by the mean of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire.

H3A: Regular news correspondents will report more instances of budgetary constraints than will newsmagazine correspondents.

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H3B: Regular news correspondents will report more instances of budgetary constraints affecting their job satisfaction than will newsmagazine correspondents.

Method

To answer the hypotheses, two separate surveys were conducted. First, a survey was mailed in May 1999 to all correspondents who work for the news divisions at ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, and PBS. Second, the same survey was sent in October 2002 to newsmagazine correspondents for ABC, CBS, and NBC.[1] The names, locations, sex, and race of each of the correspondents were obtained from contacts at each of the networks. These contacts provided a list of all correspondents at their networks to ensure that new correspondents were included in the survey and that any correspondents who no longer worked for that network would not be included.

Correspondents were defined as the people who create the news stories and have their names and faces attached to them. The first study included correspondents headquartered in both United States and international bureaus. The second survey was sent to correspondents for newsmagazines and other non-nightly news programs where stories were more long-form.[2] Full-time anchors were not included in either survey. The number of regular news correspondents for ABC was 60; 49 for CBS; 106 for CNN; 43 for NBC; and 15 for PBS, which made a universe of 273. The survey was sent to every

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[1] The first survey was sent to every correspondent for the regular news programs for those networks. The second survey was sent to every correspondent for any non-nightly news program that had long-form reports by its correspondents. These focused only on ABC, CBS, and NBC because at the time of the survey, the FOX newsmagazine, The Pulse, was on hiatus. CNN had abandoned its attempt at a newsmagazine, NewsStand, in 1999 (Katz, 1999). PBS does have long-form reports by correspondents, but NewsHour was included in the first survey and was therefore not included in the second.

[2] The second survey included correspondents from 60 Minutes, 20/20, Primetime Live, Dateline, Nightline, and CBS Sunday Morning. Although some of these programs have more of a tabloid style than others, they all give the correspondents the opportunity to have more long-form reports than those correspondents who report for regular news programs.

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correspondent for these networks, and 132 replied for a response rate of 48%. The number of newsmagazine correspondents for ABC was 21; 20 for CBS; and 12 for NBC, which made a universe of 53. The survey was sent to every correspondent for these networks, and 22 replied for a response rate of 41.5%.

The mail survey sent to the correspondents was a combination of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) (Weiss et al., 1967), the Weaver and Wilhoit (1996) survey, some demographic information, and two open-ended questions that asked correspondents' opinions about television news and job satisfaction. The MSQ was developed to evaluate work adjustment outcomes. The combined survey was pretested on former network television correspondents whose changes were incorporated into the final version of the survey. Job satisfaction for this study was operationally defined as how much correspondents enjoy their work as determined by the mean of the MSQ job satisfaction questions and the answer to a question that specifically asked how satisfied they are with their jobs. The MSQ is one of the three leading measures of job satisfaction (Griffin & Bateman, 1986) and was chosen because it had a well-tested short version that was appropriate to use for the time-constrained correspondents.

The 20 questions in the MSQ consist of three scales: intrinsic satisfaction, extrinsic satisfaction, and overall satisfaction. In addition, each of the questions measures a particular aspect of job satisfaction: ability utilization, achievement, activity, moral values, authority, advancement, company policies and practices, compensation (pay), co-workers, creativity, independence, recognition, responsibility, security, social service, social status, variety, supervision (human relations), supervision (technical), and working conditions. Overall satisfaction measures all 20 aspects. Intrinsic satisfaction relates to

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the nature of the job itself and what the worker does. In journalism, intrinsic aspects would include autonomy to do news stories and a sense of accomplishment from producing meaningful news output. Extrinsic measures are those that come from outside the worker: the environment in which employees do their work. Examples of extrinsic aspects in journalism include a person's boss and a person's salary. Respondents answered questions on a five-point scale from very dissatisfied (1) to very satisfied (5).

For the regular news study, the reliability coefficient for the MSQ intrinsic scale was .81; for the MSQ extrinsic scale, .84; and for MSQ general satisfaction, .91. For the magazine correspondents, the reliability coefficient for the MSQ intrinsic scale was .89; for the MSQ extrinsic scale, .78; and for MSQ general satisfaction, .92. Therefore, the MSQ was reliable for these groups of respondents.

Results

To begin the comparison of the magazine and regular news correspondents, some demographic variables will be examined. For the number of years employed at their current network, regular news correspondents ranged from 1 to 32 years with a mean of 11.2. For magazine correspondents, the range was 3 to 30 years with a mean of 14.5. For total years employed in network television, regular news correspondents ranged from 1 to 37 years with a mean of 13.7. For magazine correspondents, the range was 6 to 30 years with a mean of 17.6. Overall age of the correspondents ranged from 28 to 69 with a mean of 46.6 for regular news correspondents and 32 to 60 with a mean of 49.5 for magazine correspondents. The average number of hours worked per week was very similar, 55.8 for regular news correspondents and 55.0 for magazine correspondents. Comparing salary ranges, 50% of regular news correspondents made more than $200,000 a year, 12% made between $150,000 and $200,000, 25% made between $100,000 and $149,999, and 13% made less than $100,000. All of the magazine correspondents made more than $200,000 a year. Therefore, the typical newsmagazine correspondent is slightly older, has more years of experience in network television, and makes more money than most regular news correspondents.[3]

To test Hypothesis 1, newsmagazine correspondents will be satisfied with their jobs, two different results were examined. First, respondents were asked, How satisfied are you with your job? The answers were very satisfied (5), satisfied (4), neutral (3), dissatisfied (2) and very dissatisfied (1). The mean for the newsmagazine correspondents was 4.19.

The second way of measuring job satisfaction was the mean of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, a 20-question scale. Again, the answers ranged from very satisfied (5) to very dissatisfied (1). The mean for the MSQ scale was 3.90. Because both measures are above neutral (3), Hypothesis 1 was supported.

To test Hypothesis 2A and 2B, newsmagazine correspondents will be more satisfied with their jobs than regular news correspondents, both the job satisfaction and the MSQ scale answers were compared. Table 1 shows the comparison. The hypotheses were tested with a one-tailed t-test.

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[3] All of the results apply only to those correspondents who answered the survey. For example, some of the older correspondents from some of the magazine shows did not respond, which skews the mean age lower than it would be in the universe. However, because the response rates for both surveys were similar (41.5% to 48%), comparisons are legitimate even though the Ns of the groups are different.

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Table 1 – Comparison of Newsmagazine and Regular News Correspondents for the Job Satisfaction Question.

Scale	Newsmagazine N = 22		Regular News N = 127		p value
Jab Satisfaction	4.19	(0.85)	3.83	(1.08)	0.07
MSQ Scale	3.90	(0.13)	3.67	(0.05)	0.05

The results show that newsmagazine correspondents were more satisfied than were regular news correspondents. For the question about job satisfaction, the p value was .07, but for the MSQ scale, the p value was .05. Therefore, Hypothesis 2A was not supported, but Hypothesis 2B was supported.

To test Hypothesis 3A, regular news correspondents will report more instances of budgetary constraints than will newsmagazine correspondents, the respondents were asked, "How often have you felt pressured NOT to report a story because of budgetary constraints?" To test Hypothesis 3B, regular news correspondents will report more instances of budgetary constraints affecting their job satisfaction than will newsmagazine correspondents, the respondents were asked, "How often have budgetary constraints affected your job satisfaction?" These two questions were compared using a chi-square analysis. Tables 2 and 3 show these comparisons.

Table 2. Comparison of Newsmagazine and Regular News Correspondents Regarding Not Reporting a Story Due to Budgetary Constraints.

Not Report a Story Because of Budgetary Constraints	Newsmagazine N = 21		Regular News N = 130	
Never	2	9%	12	9%
Rarely	5	25%	24	19%
Occasionally	12	57%	61	47%
Frequently	2	9%	33	25%

Chi-square value = 1.36 p = 0.24

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Table 3. Comparison of Newsmagazine and Regular News Correspondents Regarding Budgetary Constraints Affecting Job Satisfaction.

Budgetary Constraints Affect Job Satisfaction	Newsmagazine N = 21		Regular News N = 131	
Never	1	5%	9	7%
Rarely	8	38%	27	21%
Occasionally	11	52%	59	45%
Frequently	1	5%	36	27%

Chi-square value = 3.84 p = 0.05

Regular news correspondents reported a higher percentage of frequent and occasional instances of budgetary constraints (72%) compared to newsmagazine correspondents (66%), but this difference was not statistically significant. However, when asked how these constraints affected their job satisfaction, 72% of regular news correspondents replied “frequently” or “occasionally” while only 57% of newsmagazine correspondents reported feeling this way. The difference was statistically significant, p = .05. Therefore, Hypothesis 3A was not supported, but Hypothesis 3B was supported.

Even though no hypothesis was given regarding the rank order of the MSQ questions, these questions were examined to see if there were any differences in the way regular news and magazine felt about these 20 aspects of their jobs. First, a correlation was conducted on the MSQ scale with regular and magazine correspondents. It was .84, very high agreement. However, Table 4 shows the MSQ rankings in the order in which the regular news correspondents felt most positive toward them as measured on the MSQ scale, ranging from very satisfied (5) to very dissatisfied (1), and shows where some of the differences were located.

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Table 4. Rank order of the MSQ questions for regular news and magazine correspondents.

	Regular News		Magazine		Magazine
How satisfied are you about:	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	**Rank**
1. Not going against my conscience	4.36	0.85	4.27	1.03	3
2. Chance to do different things	4.17	0.98	4.27	0.93	3
3. Being able to keep busy	4.09	0.99	4.45	0.80	1
4. Steady employment	4.01	0.96	4.13	1.17	7
5. Making use of my abilities	3.92	1.11	4.13	0.89	7
5. Freedom to use my own judgment	3.92	1.11	4.41	0.92	2
7. Feeling of accomplishment	3.87	1.01	4.09	1.01	10
8. Way my co-workers get along	3.86	0.91	4.18	0.79	5
9. Prestigious position	3.80	0.91	4.09	1.02	10
10. Pay	3.79	0.99	4.04	0.90	13
11. Working alone on the job	3.70	0.96	4.10	0.91	9
12. Doing things for other people	3.69	0.88	3.76	1.09	15
13. Amount of work I do	3.66	1.00	4.09	0.92	10
14. Working conditions	3.61	1.08	4.18	0.80	5
15. Praise I get	3.48	1.15	4.00	0.87	14
16. Chance for advancement	3.28	1.01	3.14	1.21	20
17. Company policies	3.09	0.89	3.36	0.95	18
17. Competence of my supervisor	3.09	1.17	3.36	1.40	18
19. Telling subordinates what to do	3.08	0.71	3.63	0.76	16
20. Way boss handles employees	3.07	1.25	3.41	1.37	17

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The table shows that the rank order of the MSQ questions were similar in many areas, but were different in a few interesting ways. Freedom to use my own judgment was ranked fifth by the regular news correspondents, but second by the magazine correspondents. Regular news correspondents ranked the working conditions fourteenth, while magazine correspondents rank that fifth. Even though magazine correspondents are more highly paid than the regular news correspondents, they ranked pay lower than the regular news correspondents, although they are still satisfied with their pay (mean above 4). Both groups did not think highly of their supervisors or their company policies, ranking those near the bottom in both cases. The only question that was much lower for the magazine correspondents was the chance for advancement on the job which the magazine correspondents ranked last and the regular news correspondents ranked sixteenth.

Discussion

In both instances, newsmagazine and regular news correspondents were satisfied with their jobs. However, newsmagazine correspondents were more satisfied than regular news correspondents. When examining the percentages of responses to each part of the question, How satisfied are you with your job?, newsmagazine correspondents had higher percentages of being satisfied or very satisfied. Of the 22 responses, 8 (36%) were very satisfied, 12 (55%) were satisfied, 0 (0%) were neutral, 2 (9%) were dissatisfied, and 0 (0%) were very dissatisfied. Comparitively, of the 127 regular news responses, 34 (27%) were very satisfied, 63 (50%) were satisfied, 8 (6%) were neutral, 18 (14%) were dissatisfied, and 4 (3%) were very dissatisfied. That means that 91% of newsmagazine correspondents were satisfied with their jobs compared to 77% of regular news correspondents. Newsmagazine correspondents were more satisfied than the journalists in Weaver and Wilhoit's (1996) study where 27% were very satisfied, 50% were fairly satisfied, 20% were somewhat dissatisfied, and 3% were very dissatisfied.

A statistically significant difference in satisfaction was found in the MSQ satisfaction measure. Newsmagazine correspondents had a mean of 3.90 while regular news correspondents had a mean of 3.67. This could be explained because when people are given a choice on a five-point scale about their job satisfaction level, they could say that they are satisfied overall with their jobs. However, when given a list of 20 different measures of their jobs, people tend to be more dissatisfied with specific aspects, such as bosses or working conditions. Therefore, the mean on a 20-point scale is apt to be lower than the mean of the single question. Newsmagazine correspondents apparently felt fewer problems in these 20 aspects than did the regular news correspondents. Even though the job satisfaction question itself did not show a statistically significant difference, that may be because the surveys were not conducted at the same time. In the intervening three years from the first survey, ratings and budgets have continued to decrease for regular news programming which may have made the overall job satisfaction ratings lower for that group.

When examining the budgetary constraints questions, the literature showed that news was coming under pressure to make money and that budgets were being cut to ensure continued profits. The literature also seemed to indicate that the pressure was felt more in the regular news sector than the newsmagazine sector. When examining the specific question on the survey, however, it was found that 66% of newsmagazine correspondents and 72% of regular news correspondents reported frequent or occasional instances of budgetary constraints. This shows that both groups do have to consider money when they do their stories. Nonetheless, regular news correspondents report that these constraints affect their job satisfaction more than newsmagazine correspondents (72% versus 57%). It is possible that although newsmagazine correspondents may have to consider the budget when creating a story, they may be more likely to be able to do the story they want, just with a smaller budget. Regular news correspondents may not be able to do the story they want at all because it costs too much.

The ranking of the MSQ questions also point out some interesting differences between the two groups. The newsmagazine correspondents seemed to be more satisfied about their level of autonomy than the regular news correspondents. Most magazine correspondents have some say in what stories they will work on and they generally know that the stories they produce will get on the air at some point. Because of the changing nature of the daily news cycle, regular news correspondents do not know for sure that they will be on the air unless they are covering the big story of the moment. This fact may also have influenced the ranking of working conditions because regular news correspondents ranked that fourteenth, while magazine correspondents rank it fifth. However, magazine correspondents seem to feel there is less chance for advancement on the job than do regular news correspondents. It could be that regular news correspondents consider becoming newsmagazine correspondents as an advancement while those already in the position would probably have little chance of advancing to become full-time anchors.

Conclusion

Gralnick (2002) said that nightly network newscasts will probably not be able to justify their existence in their present form in the future. The news divisions themselves will continue, mainly to provide content for newsmagazines or early morning news programs. Part of the reason for the lower job satisfaction of regular news correspondents is that, as Gralnick implies, they may see the writing on the wall. On the first survey, one regular news correspondent wrote, "Generally, network news – on commercial networks – has not yet faced its own increasing irrelevance." Another stated, "If I had to add something, it's that so many in network news have no real idea what's next. Network newsmagazine shows are doing well, but hard-news broadcasts – i.e., the Evening News – continue to lose viewers to either entertainment (and all the choices on at that hour), or to the cable news operations. Still, we struggle to do well at what we do best . . .not just cover the story, but enhance it."

Even prestigious shows like ABC's Nightline may not be standing on solid ground. When ABC tried to court David Letterman for its late evening lineup, ABC News President David Westin had to hear from the New York Times that Nightline may be cancelled (Potter, 2002). Newsmagazines in general fare well in the ratings comparitively speaking. The venerable 60 Minutes is in the Top 20 and can regularly expect to have 16 million viewers or so ("Network Primetime Averages," 2003). Other magazine shows can pull those kinds of numbers or higher with special interviews with Michael Jackson (relating to alleged child abuse) or Robert Blake (relating to his alleged murder of his wife). The problem may be that even though these programs draw viewers, they are not the young viewers so highly prized by advertisers, so even newsmagazines as we know them may have to change in the future (Potter, 2002).

Hewitt (1998) said, "But, with a lonely exception here and there in that plethora of so-called newsmagazines and syndicated talk shows that have all but taken over network TV, the kind of tasteful and important journalism that made CBS News, ABC News and NBC News giants in the news business is, for the most part, gone" (p. 5). One of the ABC regular news correspondents agreed: "Network news is on too early for most people to see it. It is too short to go very in-depth. Magazine shows, Dateline, 20/20 have the time, but seem to shy away from important stories to report 'promotable' stories which are trash. The best news show on TV is Nightline. They give time to important stories." But now that Nightline has been shown to be vulnerable, it will be interesting to see what we classify as news in the upcoming years and how that will affect the job satisfaction and morale of the correspondents who report for those news outlets.

Future research in this area should examine more thoroughly how secure the correspondents feel in their jobs. The first survey was conducted in 1999 and ratings for the regular news programs have declined since then, except when big news events occur. The regular news correspondents may be more disheartened now about the state of the news business. Also, both newsmagazine and regular news correspondents should be asked what they think of the other genre of news. The open-ended responses to survey questions seem to point to a difference between the perception of the relevance of the opposite group, but no questions were directly asked in that regard.

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"It Looks Like a Fun Job!"

An Examination of Media Exposure and the Cultivation of Perceptions about a Broadcast Journalism Career

Presented at the AEJMC 2003 Convention:

Radio-Television Journalism Division

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INTRODUCTION

Enrollment in journalism and mass communication programs has risen in the last several years, with a significant 5.6 percent increase reported just four years ago (Becker, Kosicki, Hammatt, Lowrey, Shin & Wilson, 1999). This is coupled with a steady increase in the number of colleges and universities offering a journalism or mass communication program, from 394 such programs in 1988, to 449 less than 10 years later (Kosicki & Becker, 1998). Clearly students are attracted to this field.

But what do these students expect of their desired career? Previous work has demonstrated a gap between mass communication and journalism programs and the profession itself (Duhe & Zukowski, 1997). Broadcast managers have indicated dissatisfaction with the job-related attitudes and behaviors of their new and potential hires (Funkhouser & Savage, 1987), and journalism students have demonstrated unrealistic perceptions of the profession (Endres & Wearden, 1990).

The reason for these disparities may be that most young people have limited personal interaction with people in certain jobs, and instead form perceptions based on media exposure. With broadcast journalism, this is further compounded by the performance nature of the work. Young people who watch real television reporters (as opposed to fictional TV or film characters employed as television reporters) may perceive that they are observing a realistic example of the occupation, while seeing only a few minutes of an eight or 10-hour workday.

The present study is a continuation of previous work by this author, in which broadcast journalism students reported their occupational influences. In that first study, exposure to real broadcast journalists was found to be a significant factor of perceived influence in the students' career choice (Trendle Polus, 2002). The current study will measure students' television exposure and their perceptions and expectations of the profession of broadcast journalism, in an attempt to establish correlations between exposure and perceptions/expectations. Both general exposure measures and content-specific exposure measures will be employed.

Review of Literature

This study is based in the tradition of cultivation effects research, which states that people who watch more television will be more likely to perceive real life to be like what they have viewed (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1994).

The concern with television portrayals is that much research has shown that viewers, especially children and adolescents, can and do learn from what they see on TV. According to Gerbner, Gross, Morgan and Signorielli (1994), "television has become the primary common source of socialization and everyday information (p. 18)." Bandura (1994) contends that virtually all direct-experience learning can occur vicariously as well, and that television provides a multitude of models from which to learn. In addition, television has been shown to have particular impact on perceptions for younger children, poorer children and children of minority groups (Beuf, 1974; Calvert & Huston, 1987; Durkin, 1984; King & Multon, 1996; McGhee & Frueh, 1980; Morgan, 1982; Repetti, 1984; Signorielli, 1989).

Many researchers have documented the role of media in occupational socialization. They have found that young viewers gain occupational information from television (Huston, Wright, Fitch, Wroblewski & Piemyat, 1997; O'Bryant & Corder-Bolz, 1978; Wroblewski & Huston, 1987), with the most salience attached to occupations about which they lack personal experience. Previous work has also shown television to be a source of inspiration for occupational decision-making (King & Multon, 1996; Wright, Huston, Truglio, Fitch, Smith, & Piemyat, 1995). When young people see a liked character engaged in an occupational activity, especially if that activity is rewarded, they may develop an interest in pursuing that same occupation.

Jablin (1987) includes media as one of his five factors of "vocational anticipatory socialization," the process of gathering occupational information, intentionally and unintentionally, weighing that information against one's self-concept, and eventually making a career choice.

Observing occupational models is also a component of Gottfredson's (1996) theory of circumscription and compromise. The theory states that people hold images of occupations, comprised of "the personalities of people in those occupations, the work they do, the lives they lead, the rewards and conditions of the work, and the appropriateness of that work for different types of people (p. 184)." Gottfredson contends Americans from all facets of society share basically the same images of occupations and the people in them.

Occupational Models on Television

Signorielli (1993) states, "Occupational roles are central to most, if not all, of television's stories (p. 316)." In her analysis of primetime television programs from 1969 to 1985, Signorielli (1989) reported that 68 percent of male characters and 48 percent of female characters worked in some recognizable job. The majority (19.7%) were categorized as "professionals," followed by managers and blue-collar workers. Police/private investigators were portrayed most often; judges and scientists were portrayed least often. "Journalists" were not included in the categorization scheme.

Typically, those television characters who have jobs do not do much actual "work," spending more time on romance, family dynamics and social relationships. Previous content analyses have demonstrated a focus on the glamorous, dramatic aspects of jobs, with little emphasis on the hard work, boredom and routine elements (Wright et al., 1995). For example, Signorielli (1993) points out that TV police programs stress the violent and active aspects of catching criminals, typically ignoring more mundane assignments and clerical duties. The popular medical drama *ER* offers "a vivid glimpse into the practice of medicine," according to one medical educator, but also tends to glamorize the work of emergency room physicians (O'Connor, 1998).

In situation comedies, the workplace generally serves as a backdrop for plotlines emphasizing social relationships and romantic pursuits, according to previous analyses, which have noted that sitcom characters are like surrogate families (Douglas & Olson, 1995), shows vary little from one to another (Whissell, 1998) and shows vary little in their level of reality (Winzenburg, 1995).

Occupational Perceptions and Expectations

Several studies have indicated that TV's representations of occupations and occupational behavior may affect expectations of how people behave at work (DeFleur & DeFleur, 1967; King & Multon, 1996; Wroblewski & Huston, 1987). Wright et al.

(1995) found clear differences in children's knowledge of real occupations and TV occupations. Children thought that TV jobs entailed higher income, more glamour, and more dramatic events without consequences. Real jobs involved more effort, gained more respect, required more education, and (contrary to prediction) offered more excitement.

In studies regarding television viewing influence on perceptions of doctors and attorneys (Pfau, Mullen, Deidrich & Garrow, 1995; Pfau, Mullen & Garrow, 1995), viewers who watched more programs featuring those two professions perceived the real-life counterparts as similar to the fictional portrayals. Heavy viewers of medical shows perceived doctors as more likely to be female, young and physically attractive. Heavy viewers of shows featuring lawyer perceived lawyers as powerful and charismatic.

Sources of Influence for Broadcast Journalism Students

In the specific instance under examination here, how do broadcast journalism students form perceptions and expectations of their future careers? Previous surveys of such students point toward high school newspaper/yearbook experience and high school teachers as reasons for choosing this career, but that work did not extend into the realm of job perceptions and expectations ("ACT research shows", 1987; Dodd, Bellow & Tipton, 1990; Forrester, 1985; Mann, Wooldridge & Marema, 1987).

Media effects are rarely addressed in the available literature. In a 1990 study of high school journalism students (Dodd et al.), 18% ranked their own reading as the most important factor in their decision to pursue a journalism career, but type of reading material was not specified. In another study (Endres & Wearden, 1990) college journalism students reported they got the most and best information about their chosen field from "observing media performance," but no specifics were provided.

Media Models of Broadcast Journalists

Both real and fictional broadcast journalists are available to be observed and to serve as potential media models during the career decision-making process. Real media models include broadcast journalists who appear on local and national TV and radio, as well as on news magazines and interview programs. Fictional media models include characters who portray TV and radio journalists in television series and television movies, as well as in films, which for several years have been easily available for home viewing through cable movie channels and video/DVD rentals. Examples of real and fictional media models will be presented in the next section.

Fictional TV Models

TV shows about police officers, doctors and lawyers have long ruled the television airwaves, each evolving into a full-fledged genre. There have been 3-4 medical shows and as many as 10 police shows on prime-time television over the last several seasons (Peyser, 2000). Shows about news broadcasters have not reached that level, but some examples are available for examination.

News director Lou Grant, producer Murray Slaughter, anchorman Ted Baxter and associate producer Mary Richards were among the first TV characters employed as broadcast journalists, on the 1970s sitcom *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. Typically, the plots centered on relationships rather than job duties. In newsroom scenes, Murray was always typing, and Ted was often reading (bumbling) news stories, but viewers rarely saw realistic details of the daily grind of newscast production.

Later sitcoms set in TV and radio newsrooms exhibited the same emphasis on characters' personal lives and relationships. These include *WKRP in Cincinnati*, *NewsRadio,* and *The Naked Truth* (Hiltbrand, 1991, 1995). In the 90s, newsroom-based sitcoms *Murphy Brown, SportsNight* and *Lateline* added an infusion of reality by incorporating story meetings and control rooms, featuring guest appearances by real newsmakers and mirroring current news and sports events (Marin, 1998a, Marin, 1998b).

Dramatic examples of fictional broadcast journalists on television are harder to find. TV newsman Lou Grant switched to print when his character was resurrected for *Lou Grant*, the 1980s dramatic series. Another drama, *WIOU,* featured reporters, producers, anchors and photographers at a local, low-rated television station, working to produce daily newscasts (Hiltbrand, 1990). It aired only a few weeks in the fall of 1990.

Several TV dramas have had one or two lead characters employed as broadcast journalists. On *Beverly Hills 90210* the character Brandon Walsh worked at his high school and college newspapers, then became a TV journalist. On *Dawson's Creek* the title character's mother was a television news anchor. On the soap opera *Days of Our Lives*, characters Jennifer Horton and Jack Devereaux worked as TV news reporters. Other soap operas, including *All My Children, Another World* and *Guiding Light* have featured news reporters and television stations at various times.

Broadcast journalists have appeared as minor characters on television dramas, such as *ER*, *The West Wing*, and *Law and Order*. These characters typically appear in a single episode, often part of a "pack" of reporters, and are not usually known by name. Mahon (1994) characterizes these appearances as plot-moving devices and laments that they are extremely negative and stereotypical portrayals.

Because the most enduring TV portrayals of broadcast journalists are found in situation comedies, they are subject to the genre's limitations, about which prior research exists. The cast of characters is like a surrogate family (Douglas & Olson, 1995), and their relationships are central to most plotlines. Romantic relationships provide much of the comic material and characters are frequently put into ridiculous situations, especially in shows that rely on physical comedy. Prior analyses of broadcast journalist characters on situation comedies indicate common stereotypes: the arrogant, narcissistic anchorperson, the "news nerd", the overly ambitious intern/assistant, and the crusty-but-lovable boss (Hiltbrand, 1990, 1991, 1995; Marin, 1998a, 1998b).

Fictional Film Models

Fictional broadcast journalists who have appeared in films offer more potential occupational models. They are included in the current project for two reasons. First, these portrayals are readily available for home viewing, through the proliferation of cable movie channels and the availability of video rentals. Current college-age students may not make a significant differentiation between a network TV sitcom and a feature film on HBO. Secondly, the portrayals in the feature films to be presented are markedly more serious and dramatic than the situation comedy portrayals presented previously and therefore offer opportunity for a richer analysis.

More than 1000 movies have featured reporters as central characters, but the majority have been print journalists (Mahon, 1994). Notable broadcast journalists include *Network's* anchorman Howard Beale and *The China Syndrome*'s reporter Kimberly Wells, both characterized extremely dramatized and exaggerated (Hanson, 1996).

Film critic Roger Ebert called 1987's *Broadcast News* "as knowledgeable about the TV news-gathering process as any movie ever made (1987)." Based at a fictional TV network news operation, the film featured producer Jane Craig, reporter Aaron Altman and reporter/anchor Tom Grunick. The characters were shown in all facets of newsgathering: interviewing, reporting, and editing. News broadcasts were shown from both anchor desk and control room perspectives. Scenes featured newsroom decision-making, crisis management, and the political and economic realities of network news.

Personal relationships were the focus of two other newsroom-based films: the 1988 comedy *Switching Channels* (a remake of the newspaper-based *The Front Page*) and 1996's *Up Close and Personal.* The first emphasized a competitive relationship between characters involved in newsgathering, (Ebert, 1988) while the second emphasized the marketing and packaging of television news by talent consultants, agents and ratings services (Ebert, 1996). Still, both were primarily billed as love stories.

Two highly negative portrayals of broadcast journalists came in two mid-90s films: *Natural Born Killers* and *To Die For.* In the first, the character Wayne Gale was a tabloid television reporter who became embroiled in covering a cross-country killing spree perpetrated by a young husband and wife and eventually became a killer himself.

Hanson (1996) called this portrayal "the lowest form of life." Gale was shown performing some aspects of his reporting job, but his work was not the film's focus. In *To Die For*, the Suzanne Stone character aspired to a career in network television and took a weathercasting job at a small cable station, which became the setting for several scenes. Other scenes involved Stone's efforts to shoot and edit a news documentary about local teenagers, one of whom she seduced and coerced into murdering her husband.

Fictional portrayals of real journalists Mike Wallace, Don Hewitt, and Lowell Bergman, all of TV's *60 Minutes,* were featured in the 1999 film *The Insider*. Like the earlier *Broadcast News*, this film centered on a producer and offered a behind-the-scenes perspective of investigative news reporting and an ensuing ethical crisis. Ebert (1999) suggests that the film demonstrated "what a long, slow, frustrating process investigative journalism can be," and that is also presented an example of "skilled journalism."

Some films have featured fictional broadcast journalists in small roles. A TV reporter character, Gale Weathers, appeared in the three *Scream* movies. In *Primal Fear* and *The Fugitive*, Chicago TV reporters and anchors played themselves in brief roles. Reporters who are not central characters are usually anonymous and overwhelmingly negative, "a pack of shouting men and women armed with cameras and notebooks," hounding the show's major characters (Saltzman, 1993, p. 55).

The portrayals clearly vary in their level of realism, though no objective content analysis was found. They also vary in their level of stereotyping. Gersh (1991) contends reporters are "usually portrayed as rude, divorced, hard-drinking, cigarette-smoking misfits who will do anything for a front-page byline (or a lead story)" (p. 18).

Real Media Models

A vast number of real broadcast journalists can be watched and listened to on a daily, even hourly basis. The proliferation of all-news channels on cable services, the creation of multiple news magazine programs, the expansion of newscasts at the local level and the popularity of news/talk radio all add to the potential sources of influence. One-thousand four-hundred twenty-two non-satellite television stations in the US produce an average of 2.9 hours of local news content each weekday (Papper & Gerhard, 1999), with an average of 32 full-time news employees.

CNN, local TV news and public television were cited as the most trustworthy news sources, in a 1998 Gallup Poll (Prato, 1998). Nightly network newscasts and local newscasts were ranked first and second as the prime sources of news in that poll. In another study, 84% of 509 households surveyed named local TV news as their most frequent and most influential source of information (Trigoboff, 1998).

Recent content analyses of local TV newscasts (Fitzgerald, 1997; Grossman, 1997; US Department of Health and Human Services, 1998) reported a heavy emphasis on crime. Thirty percent of available news time was filled with crime stories, according to one study. Crime coverage was followed in the rankings by coverage of government and politics, weather, and accidents/disasters.

At the national level, observers have noted a shift from traditional journalism, to a softer, more entertainment-oriented focus. Network newscasts have been described as "a deep layer of feature stories and analysis topped off with a relatively thin layer of actual news (Adalian, 1999, p.1)." Alter (1999) states that analysis and entertainment are the highest values in current TV news operations. He blames the popularity of and reliance on talk show formats for this shift.

Many broadcast news executives blame tabloid programs like *A Current Affair, Hard Copy* and *Inside Edition* for fueling a trend toward sensationalistic news coverage (Viles, 1993). Those programs were the first to employ distinctive production techniques: flashy graphics, creative editing, high-energy story-telling and increased use of music.

The emergence of the news magazine format has also changed the national news landscape. In the late 1990s, news magazines were among the highest-rated primetime programs, and the anchor positions are some of the most coveted in the news business (Levin, 1997). Levin quotes CBS News president Andrew Heyward, "Unfortunately, prime-time is seen as more happening or more glamorous than newscasts (p.1)." *60 Minutes* producer Don Hewitt said of the news magazine phenomenon, "It's spawning a generation of personalities, not newspeople (Levin, 1997, p.1)." Many news anchors have indeed achieved celebrity status. Much has been written about their salaries, their lifestyles, their successes and failures (e.g., Levin, 1997; Pickerill, 1997; Zoglin, 1989). Analysts contend that this further contributes to the blurring of entertainment and journalism (Alter, 1999; Viles, 1993).

Clearly viewers can gain occupational knowledge from watching TV newscasts and other news programs. Specifically, they can observe a great deal about the performance aspect of the job. They do not have much opportunity to observe the work that occurs behind the scenes.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The current study will draw from and attempt to build upon previous work in measuring both general perceptions of the profession and more specific expectations of what a broadcast journalism job will entail.

Perceptions and Expectations

Most prior research with journalism students has focused on their perceptions. In several studies (Bowers, 1974; Dodd, et al., 1990; Endres & Wearden, 1990; Mann et al., 1987) high school and college journalism students perceived broadcast journalism as interesting, challenging and offering a variety of assignments. Other reported perceptions include "useful to society" (Dodd et al., 1990) and "ethical" (Endres & Wearden, 1990). In one survey (Mann et al., 1987) students ranked broadcast journalism high in "prestige," but in another survey (Dodd et al., 1990) students ranked it low.

Students' expectations of a career in broadcast journalism have also been addressed previously. Students expected poor job security (Endres & Wearden, 1990), and low salaries (Dodd et al., 1990; Mann et al., 1987), and they ranked glamour as least important out of 20 factors (Funkhouser & Savage, 1987).

Cultivation Theory and Exposure Measures

The grounding studies of cultivation theory utilized a measure of total television viewing, based on the contention that over time viewers are exposed to a set of messages that essentially repeats itself. However, there is a move toward more focused measures. Potter (1990) noted "a growing body of evidence that cultivation is linked to particular patterns of exposure" (p. 846). Recent studies found content-specific viewing to be a more reliable predictor of occupational perceptions than total viewing (Pfau, Mullen, Deidrich & Garrow, 1995; Pfau, Mullen & Garrow, 1995).

In the present study, cultivation theory would indicate that broadcast journalism students may form certain perceptions of the profession in accordance with the extent of their TV viewing. Heavy viewers, or those exposed to particularly salient content, would come to believe that broadcast journalists are like what they see on TV, but with both the real and fictional broadcast journalists available to be viewed, it is not clear which models might have greater impact. Therefore, the cultivation portion of this project will begin with the following research question:

Research Question 1:

> How does exposure to fictional and real broadcast journalists relate to students' perceptions of the field of broadcast journalism ?

Many researchers (Griffin & Sen, 1989; Huston et al., 1997; Wright, et al., 1995; Wroblewski & Huston, 1987) have found that television portrayals of occupations have a greater impact among those who have the least personal experience with these occupations. A second research question will address this aspect:

Research Question 2:

> How does experience level relate to students' perceptions of the field of broadcast journalism?

Application of cultivation theory allows for the formulation of predictions regarding how television exposure might correlate with particular expectations of the profession. As discussed earlier, most lead television characters employed as broadcast journalists are and have been in situation comedies. Because sitcom characters are seldom seen performing realistic job-related duties and are more often portrayed in social settings, the following hypotheses are made:

Hypothesis 1-2:
Exposure to fictional TV broadcast journalists will be positively correlated with expectations of easy work
Exposure to fictional TV broadcast journalists will be positively correlated expectations of sociability

Film portrayals of broadcast journalists have historically offered more intense and realistic characterizations, as noted in the previous literature review. Journalists on film deliver passionate speeches about journalistic responsibility. They work to uncover corruption and expose evil. The characters' motivations are often expressed and developed in a way they cannot be in a 30-minute sitcom, or even in an actual news broadcast. This leads to the next hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3:
Exposure to fictional film broadcast journalists will be positively correlated with expectations of usefulness to society

Exposure to real broadcast journalists on newscasts, news magazines and newschannels may cultivate expectations that a job in broadcast journalism offers interesting work, has high status and provides good material rewards. Newscast viewers typically observe a well-dressed, well-groomed anchorperson sitting at a desk. They see reporters doing live shots, stand-ups and conducting interviews. Further, especially at the network level, anchors and reporters travel frequently and often interview high-ranking leaders, politicians, celebrities and athletes. As discussed earlier, many current broadcast journalists are themselves celebrities who attract media attention about their lifestyles, salaries, etc. These factors form the rationale for the next set of hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4-6:

Exposure to real broadcast journalists will be positively correlated with expectations of intrinsic rewards (challenge, creativity, autonomy)
Exposure to real broadcast journalists will be positively correlated with expectations of status
Exposure to real broadcast journalists will be positively correlated with expectations of extrinsic rewards (job security, advancement, salary)

Predictions regarding the seventh dimension, expectations of aggressive behavior, span two categories of exposure. Real journalists, especially those involved in field reporting, live reporting and in aspects of celebrity or tabloid journalism, could be perceived as aggressive, offensive and confrontational (the three items which comprise this dimension). Journalists and analysts writing about news coverage of the OJ Simpson murder trial, Princess Diana's death and the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal have all portrayed journalists in this way (Effron, 1997; Trigoboff, 1997; Witcover, 1998). Likewise, fictional film characters playing broadcast journalists have also been characterized as aggressive and confrontational (Gersh, 1991; Hanson, 1996; Saltzman, 1993). Therefore, the final set of hypotheses is as follows:

Hypothesis 7-8:

Exposure to real broadcast journalists will be positively correlated with expectations of aggression
Exposure to fictional film broadcast journalists will be positively correlated with expectations of aggression.

METHODOLOGY

Respondents

The respondents were 191 students enrolled in mass communication or journalism programs at four universities in Arkansas, Florida, Illinois and Wisconsin, with two large programs (about 900 students each), one medium program (390 students) and one small program (> 75 students). More than half the respondents were female (56.5%), and 43.5% were male. The majority (79.6%) of the respondents were white, 12% were African American, 3.1% were Latino(a), 1% were Asian American, 1% were Native American, .5% were Arab/Middle Eastern and 2.6% were of mixed race or other ethnicity. A third (33.5%) were freshmen, 23.6% were sophomores, 24.1% were juniors, 15.2% were seniors and 1.6% were graduate students (2.1% did not indicate grade level).

The majority of respondents reported being "very certain" (47%) or "somewhat certain" (41%) of their decision to pursue a career in broadcast journalism. Most made their decision during high school (41%), with 19% reporting their decision was made before high school, 16% between high school and college, and 24% during college. Regarding the job they most hope to have, students selected "TV news anchor" most often (30%), followed by "TV sports anchor" (15%). Students who selected "other" (14%) frequently named jobs such as "entertainment reporter," "vee-jay," and "talk show host." Other most desired jobs included "TV news reporter" (7%), "TV sports reporter" (6%), "radio sports anchor" (4%), "radio news anchor" (3%), "TV news producer" (3%), "TV sports producer" (3%), "radio news reporter" (3%), and "radio sports reporter (2%). Finally, 12% said they were "not sure" what job they wanted.

Measurement

Items in this project were measured using a questionnaire comprised primarily of closed-ended items, designed to measure students' media exposure, their perceptions and expectations of the broadcast journalism profession, and their experience level.

Television/Film Exposure

Measures of media exposure were broken into three areas: exposure to real television journalists, exposure to fictional journalists on television programs and exposure to fictional journalists in films.

Exposure to Real Broadcast Journalists

Students were asked to rate how often they watch the following news programs, on a five-point scale (1 = never to 5 = frequently): national evening newscasts, national morning newscasts, news magazine programs, news analysis programs, 24-hour news channels, and local newscasts. Under each item, three example programs were listed in order to aid recall and increase understanding of the information being sought. The six items were averaged to create an index of news exposure.

In a separate measure, students were asked to indicate how many hours they watch television news programs in a typical week.

Exposure to Fictional Broadcast Journalists on Television

For exposure to fictional broadcast journalists, students were asked to rate on a five-point scale (1 = never to 5 = frequently) how often they watch or used to watch six television series: *SportsNight*, *Lateline*, *NewsRadio*, *Murphy Brown*, *WKRP in Cincinnati* and *The Mary Tyler Moore Show.* The six were selected because they featured a newsroom, television station or radio station as their main setting, and because the majority of the characters were employed in broadcasting. Soap operas and primetime programs with characters employed as journalists were not included because broadcasting was not the main setting. The six selected programs represent a range of time periods, with two programs from the 1970s (which current students have presumably seen in syndication), two from the late 1980s to early 1990s, and two from the late 1990s. The six programs' scores were averaged to form an index of fictional television exposure.

In a separate measure, students were asked to indicate on a five-point scale (1 = never to 5 = frequently) how often they have watched TV shows featuring fictional broadcast journalists.

Exposure to Fictional Broadcast Journalists in Films

Students were asked to indicate (yes/no) which of the following six movies they had seen: *Network, Broadcast News, Switching Channels, To Die For, Up Close and Personal* and *The Insider.* These six were selected in part because they represented various time periods, from 1976's *Network* to *The Insider*, released in 1999. The six films featured main characters employed as broadcast journalists, with television networks or stations as their main settings. The films also feature a mix of positive and negative portrayals of broadcast journalists. The number of films seen was counted, in order to form an index of fictional film exposure.

In a separate measure, students were asked to indicate on a five-point scale (1 = never to 5 = frequently) how often they have watched films featuring fictional broadcast journalists.

Perceptions and Expectations of Broadcast Journalism

Perceptions of the profession of broadcast journalism and their expectations of a job in broadcast journalism were measured by having students rate their level of agreement with a number of statements (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Perceptions of Broadcast Journalism

Six statements addressed perceptions of broadcast journalism as a profession. Five of the six (*interesting work, useful in society, financially rewarding, prestige* and *opportunity for good family life*) were taken from Dodd et al. (1990), who used them to survey students attending a press convention. They were previously used in a similar way in the 1950s and 1960s. To these six, one item was added: *journalism is an ethical profession*. These six items were analyzed separately.

Expectations of Broadcast Journalism

Twenty-three statements addressed expectations of what it would be like to work in broadcast journalism. Of these, 21 were used to form seven subscales. The items on each subscale were averaged. Four subscales were adapted from previous research: status (2 items, alpha = .53) and easy work (4 items, alpha =.65) (adapted from Signorielli, 1993), extrinsic rewards (3 items, alpha =.67) and intrinsic rewards (3 items, alpha =.59) (adapted from Ryu & Mortimer, 1996). Three subscales were created for this project: social aspect of the work (3 items, alpha =.57), usefulness to society (3 items, alpha =.79) and aggression (3 items, alpha =.55). One item, "I expect that a job in broadcast journalism will allow me to make my own decisions," was eliminated from analysis due to the extremely low alpha of the subscale (intrinsic values) on which it was included. A final item, "I will be expected to behave unethically in a job in broadcast journalism," was analyzed separately.

Finally, an index of the respondents' experience level was created by adding four items: internship; the number of courses they had taken that involved skills such as reporting, writing, editing, production; memberships in student/professional organizations; and journalism experience (high school, college, or professional).

Procedure

After receiving Institutional Review Board approval, the researcher contacted seven instructors at four universities and asked them to distribute surveys to students in mass communication and broadcast journalism courses. Surveys were self-administered, with some completed during class time; some returned to the instructor later. Three-hundred surveys were distributed; 191 usable surveys were returned (64% response rate).

RESULTS

All statistical calculations were made using the standard statistical procedures in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), a set of computer programs created for the analysis of social science data.

Research Question 1

Research question 1 asked how exposure to fictional and real broadcast journalists would relate to students' perceptions of the profession. The index of exposure to real broadcast journalists was significantly correlated with perceptions of journalism as a prestigious profession ($r = .23$, $p < .001$) and with perceptions that journalism offers interesting work (r = .19, p < .01) and is useful in society (r = .19, p = .01). No significant correlations were found with any other measures of media exposure.

Research Question 2

The correlation of students' experience level and perceptions provided two significant findings. Experience level was negatively correlated with perceptions that journalism is financially rewarding (r = -.27, p < .001) and that journalism provides an opportunity for good family life (r = -.25, p < .001).

Hypotheses 1 - 8

The hypotheses in this project addressed students' expectations of a job in broadcast journalism. Hypotheses 1 and 2 predicted exposure to fictional TV broadcast journalists would be correlated with expectations of easy work and sociability. According to the results displayed in Table 1, those relationships were not significant. Hypothesis 3 stated that exposure to fictional film broadcast journalists would be correlated with expectations of being useful to society. That relationship was not significant. However, significant results were obtained in Hypotheses 4, 5 and 6, involving exposure to real broadcast journalists. Exposure to real journalists positively correlated with expectations of intrinsic rewards (r = .21, p < .005), as predicted. Exposure to real broadcast journalists also positively correlated with expectations of being useful to society (r = .26, p < .001). Hypothesis 7, regarding expectations of aggression, was supported, with significant results on both the exposure index (r = .21, p < .001) and the single-item exposure measure (r = .19, p < .01). There was no support for Hypothesis 8, the prediction of a correlation between aggression and film exposure.

Table 1

Correlations Among Media Exposure and Expectations of Broadcast Journalism

	Easywork	Social	Useful	Intrinsic	Extrinsic	Status	Aggression
Film Index	-.03	-.06	-.05	-.03	-.03	.06	.14
Film 1-Item	-.04	-.02	.03	.09	.02	-.01	-.02
TV Index	.09	.00	-.01	-.06	.11	.06	.08
TV 1-Item	-.11	.01	.08	.12	.07	.01	-.00
News Index	-.06	-.03	.26***	.21**	.04	.10	.25***
News 1-Item	.01	-.13	.09	-.01	.07	.04	.20*

*p < .01, ** p < .005, *** p < .001

Note. 1-tailed tests were used for directional hypotheses; 2-tailed tests were used for all other correlations. Film Index = Index of exposure 6 films, Film 1-Item = self-reported film exposure, TV Index = Index of exposure to 6 situation comedies, TV 1-Item = self-reported fictional TV exposure, News Index = Index of exposure to 6 types of TV news programs, News 1-Item = self-reported TV news exposure

DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings

Attempts to build support for cultivation theory were somewhat successful, utilizing the content-specific approach espoused by several researchers (Pfau, Mullen, Diedrich, et al., 1995; Potter, 1990; Reep & Dambrot, 1994). Exposure to real broadcast journalists was correlated with perceptions that the field has status, useful in society, and offers interesting work. News exposure was also correlated with expectations that a job in broadcast journalism would fulfill intrinsic needs and would be useful to society. These findings mirror previous surveys on perceptions of journalism students (Dodd et al., 1990, Endres & Wearden, 1990; Mann et al., 1987), but they extend that work by tying those perceptions to media exposure. Another significant finding involved a previously unresearched perception: whether the job will require aggressive and confrontational behavior. Students with higher levels of news exposure were more likely to believe so.

In addition to the aggression item, significant findings resulted from positive perceptions, which is logical because such respondents are obviously attracted to the profession. This may also indicate an explanation rooted in uses and gratifications: students attracted to this career seek career models and focus on the attractive and positive aspects. Even aggressive behavior may be perceived as attractive and positive to students attracted to this career. Still, cultivation theorists contend that evidence of even a slight effect is very important to their work (Morgan & Signorielli, 1990).

Exposure to fictional characters did not provide any significant correlations with career perceptions or expectations. Overall, the attempts to measure exposure to fictional journalists were unsuccessful, because the TV programs and films presented in the survey were not frequently watched by most respondents. However, through the single-item measures, respondents indicated they have seen fictional broadcast journalists, so future research may be warranted in this area. Due to these results regarding fictional portrayals, it is difficult to generalize to fictional portrayals of any other occupations.

Findings regarding the experience level of respondents, which contradict previous work (Griffin & Sen, 1989; Huston et al., 1997; Wright, et al., 1995; Wroblewski & Huston, 1987), make sense in the realm of media-related careers. Typically, young people with little occupational experience rely more heavily on TV as a source of occupational information and inspiration, often leading to unrealistic perceptions. However, students who have chosen a TV career apparently turn to the media to gain more information, even as their own knowledge and experience grows.

It may be possible to generalize to larger populations of students, because these results highlight the expanding role of media in the lives of young people during the time they are making important career and educational decisions. However, the primary intent of this project was to provide needed information about the specific population of aspiring broadcast journalists, by approaching their situation with a theoretical approach that had not yet been utilized.

Limitations

The primary limitations of this study are those typical to survey research. Questionnaire length may have limited or compromised accuracy of responses. Self-reports of media exposure may not have been accurate since individuals generally under-report television viewing, and due to the potential ambiguity of two items: "How often have you watched television programs that feature fictional broadcast journalists?" and "How often have you watched films that feature fictional broadcast journalists?" Because 'fictional broadcast journalist' was not defined, and no examples were given, respondents likely formed their own conceptions of that term.

Another limitation is the inability to determine causality. Media exposure may have led the students to develop certain perceptions and expectations of the broadcast journalism profession. However, it is also possible that their already-existing perceptions and expectations were reinforced by subsequent media exposure.

This study suffered from the lack of a focused and objective analysis of the media portrayals being measured, instead relying on a variety of analyses and reports. Ideally, a content analysis should be done before undertaking a study in the cultivation tradition (Morgan & Signorielli, 1990). Better information about the occupational portrayals being studied could lead to the construction of a more effective scale for measuring occupational perceptions and expectations.

Directions for Future Research

Future research regarding the career decisions of aspiring broadcast journalists should focus on the specific models to which these students are exposed and attracted. A previous study (Trendle Polus, 2002) indicated that music television, entertainment television and sports programming appear to be significant sources of career information. Future work could examine the characteristics of such programs and the broadcasters on them, and attempt to correlate those with students' perceptions and expectations.

Primetime television portrayals not addressed in the present study could be included in future work. For example, a recent episode of *ER* featured a news reporter who spent the day in the emergency room, used questionable newsgathering tactics and wrote an inflammatory and unfavorable story. Because *ER* has millions of viewers, the potential impact is vast. Other portrayals, in both primetime and daytime television, may be of significance to college-age individuals.

Previous work on parasocial interaction could be integrated into future research. Studies have shown viewers who develop a high degree of liking for a particular character often want to be like that character (Hoffner, 1996; Rubin & Perse, 1989). That emulation may extend to an interest in the character's employment and the concept can be further extended to parasocial interaction with newscasters, as it relates specifically to the development of career interests.

Another avenue of future research could include students who considered, but rejected, a career in broadcast journalism, or who never considered it at all. Were these students affected by the negative portrayals of fictional broadcast journalists which have been documented by many authors (e.g., Gersh, 1991; Hanson, 1996; Mahon, 1994; Saltzman, 1993)? Or were they affected by the criticisms that many authors, analysts and pundits have leveled against real broadcast journalists over the last decade (Effron, 1997; Trigoboff, 1997; Witcover, 1998)?

In conclusion, the majority of prior research on journalism influences is quickly growing outdated, especially in the specific area of broadcast journalism. The current findings indicate that students' perceptions and expectations of the profession are most closely tied to exposure to real broadcast journalists, rather than fictional ones. The findings also indicate positive perceptions: broadcast journalism is useful to society and offers interesting work, as well as realistic perceptions about the financial rewards and the opportunity for good family life. Recognizing and understanding what influences and motivates broadcast journalism students and what perceptions and expectations they hold as a result should be of critical importance to educators and professionals in this field.

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Sex, Drugs, and TV News:

When a Reporter is Arrested

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Running head: REPORTER ARREST

Abstract

On January 21, 2000, television newsrooms in New Orleans faced a major journalistic and ethical crisis. The highest-paid and one of the most respected television news reporters was arrested in a sex and drug scandal that shocked his fellow reporters and the officers in the New Orleans Police Department. Since Mike Longman had worked in four different broadcast newsrooms in the city, many of the television news managers and his fellow reporters knew him well. In addition, Longman was a true media insider whose reputation as a hard-hitting journalist was well known to the public. Television news managers had many decisions to make that day: whether to cover the arrest, what significance to give it, and how to frame the story in their newscasts. The news director at WVUE-TV, which employed Longman, had even tougher responsibilities to inform his audience about the problems of a showcased reporter. This study examines the newscasts of all four television news departments that were produced on that day and questions some of the news managers as to the goals and values that informed the decisions made immediately after the Longman arrest. It provides insight into television newsroom practices on a day in which an insider became the news.

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Introduction

In the summer of 1996, 39-year-old Mike Longman became the highest paid general assignment news reporter in New Orleans television history. Sources told the New Orleans Times-Picayune that Longman's three-year contract with WVUE-TV Fox 8 called for $95,000 in salary the first year and $100,000 in salary for the second and third years (Lorando, April 3, 1996). Longman's former employer, CBS-powerhouse WWL-TV, had refused to match the Fox 8 offer. Longman's WWL contract had a non-compete clause which would keep him off of the air for six months, but when he returned, he'd be Fox 8's showcased 9 pm reporter with more time to research and tell his stories.

Longman cut his teeth as a television reporter at WWL. The station hired him in 1983 after he spent three years at WGSO radio followed by two years at WWL radio (WVUE-TV, 5:00 pm, January 20, 2000). At WWL-TV, Longman became known for his investigative, hard-hitting reports. The *Times-Picayune* called him " . . . a career pavement-pounder with a flair for fact-finding and a refreshing no-frills delivery. The emotionally detached precision of his reporting has long distinguished him—and WWL—in a medium given to outbursts of sensationalism and hyperbole" (Lorando, April 9, 1996, D-1). The newspaper concluded that WWL's loss was WVUE's gain, and Longman himself quipped that he was " . . .not going to be easy to replace" (Lorando, April 9, 1996, D-1).

But in a stunning change of fortune, on Friday, January 21, 2000, Longman would be under arrest for sex crimes with juveniles. The day before, police had seized 22 videotapes and drug paraphernalia from Longman's home. Police said the tapes showed about 50 males having sex and taking drugs with each other and Longman, and several of the males appeared to be younger than 17 years of age. A New Orleans Police source told WVUE-TV news director Keith Esparros that the scenes on the tapes were among the worst the police department had ever seen (Esparros, 2002). Longman was in the middle of a career-ending scandal, and New Orleans television news departments faced a day of decision that would test their commitment to truth-telling and journalism ethics.

The News Day. Friday, January 21, 2000, was already a day of big news stories, both locally and nationally. Jury selection was continuing in Baton Rouge in the corruption trial of former Louisiana governor Edwin Edwards. All of the New Orleans television news departments were following the Edwards trial, though some did not report on the court proceedings every day (Pendarvis, 2002). The Elian Gonzales case was unfolding in Washington and Miami, with the arrival of his grandmothers from Cuba providing the latest twist. The women had come to plead with the United States to allow Elian to return to Cuba.

On Thursday, January 20, Longman hired well-known defense attorney Arthur "Buddy" Lemann III. He told Esparros he was going to surrender to New Orleans police the next day and that he might hold a news conference. Shortly before his surrender at 1:25 pm, Longman made a statement to the media in Lemann's office. He said he didn't know the details of the charges against him so he couldn't be specific, but that he "never knowingly harmed or hurt anyone" (WVUE-TV, 5:00 pm newscast, January 20, 2002). He told reporters and photographers from all four television news departments that he expected them to do their jobs even though covering his arrest would be hard. New Orleans Police Sex Crimes Unit commander Lt. David Benelli also attended the news

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conference. Longman surrendered and appeared before Judge Frank Marullo, who released him on his own recognizance.

At approximately 3:00 pm, New Orleans Police Superintendent Richard Pennington called the media together for a news conference of his own. He outlined the charges against Longman: crime against nature, carnal knowledge of a juvenile, contributing to the delinquency of a juvenile, possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of cocaine residue. Pennington said the investigation of Longman began after a 15-year-old resident of a home for abused youths told his social worker about having sex with Longman. The social worker reported the incident to police, as he or she was required by law to do. Pennington said the seized videotapes showed sex among males some of whom appeared to be underage, and he asked the public for help in identifying them. "We're talking about parents; we're talking about young people who may have been in his association" (WGNO-TV, 5:00 pm, January 20, 2000), Pennington said.

WVUE-TV carried the Pennington news conference live after breaking into afternoon programming. The stations then began preparing their coverage for the four early newscasts that would air at 5:00 pm.

Review of Literature

This study attempts to evaluate the television news coverage of the Mike Longman arrest, given that he was a media "insider" with experience at two of the four television news stations and given that his arrest involved crimes with juvenile victims. Current scholarly literature provides little guidance on studying television news practices when the story involves a colleague. However, two broad areas, the studies of non-routine news decisions and the ethical considerations of conflict of interest can provide some assistance in the current inquiry. Professional ethical guidelines for covering juveniles helps in evaluating the coverage of the Longman arrest, which at the time appeared to involve numerous underage boys.

The Non-routine story. Tuchman (1978) described the elements of non-routine news coverage as the initial shock inside of the newsroom and the changes in work routine needed to cover the story under deadline. Berkowitz (1992) took the "what-a-story" a step further by identifying three phrases of non-routine coverage development: 1. Initial pronouncements of surprise, 2. Giving the surprise story better play than non-routine news, and 3. Stretching resources to get the story covered. In his study of television news coverage of a plane crash, Berkowitz concluded that the demands of covering a non-routine news story can result in coverage that is less than desirable. The more time that passed after the story broke, the more typical coverage of the event became. One could expect, then, that the first coverage of the "what-a-story" might be different than the coverage of more routine, expected events.

Conflicts of interest. Though there are numerous ethical challenges in the Longman story, the one most closely studied by researchers is the conflict of interest issue. The Code of Ethics of the Radio-Television News Directors Association requires electronic journalists to act with "independence." However, the code addresses mostly influences from the outside—management, advertisers, special interest groups—that may distort the news (Radio-Television News Directors Association, 2000). It does not mention the particular conflict of inside interests, as the Longman arrest clearly presented in January 2002.

Matelski (1991) outlines four limitations to any ethical decision made in the television newsroom: 1. There is a limited amount of time to report the story on the air, 2. Television must tell its stories visually, so there must be video available for most stories, 3. There is an inherent emphasis on entertain in television news, and 4. Television news operations must make money for their stations in order to stay on the air. At least the first three and possible the fourth limitation appeared to be in operation in the coverage of Longman's arrest.

Christians, Rotzoll, and Fackler (1991) apply Aristotle's Golden Mean as a way of resolving a conflict of interest problem in a newspaper newsroom. The question was whether a newspaper reporter could cover a story without bias if he were heavily involved in the work of a political party. The Golden Mean allowed the newspaper to prohibit its reporters outside activities in some cases but not others while prohibiting absolutely a reporter from covering his or her own activities. The authors stated that a human being cannot "remain above the fray, a neutral observer. Since humans are valuing creatures, neutrality is not possible" (Christians, Rotzoll, and Fackler, 1991, p. 41). They state that a news organization's moral obligation is to make it clear "what values are operating." Day (2000) makes a similar argument that not all conflicts of interest are unacceptable or are damaging to the person faced with an ethical decision, but that disclosure of all conflicts of interests to the public should be a guiding rule for news organization.

Klaidman and Beauchamp (1987) deal with several cases in which the news media became part of the news story. In all those cases, the news organization has to deal with the possibility of being manipulated by inside or outside sources. The authors do not condemn news organizations for being involved in a story; in fact, they say it is often unavoidable. They conclude: "For manipulation to be unacceptable, there must be not only a manipulative influence but an undue or unjustified influence" (Klaidman and Beauchamp, 1987, 207). In general, they argue that business considerations are not acceptable reasons for manipulation to occur.

Juvenile victims. The service arm of RTNDA, the Radio-Television News Directors Foundation, has studied extensively the problems presented when juveniles are crime perpetrators or victims. Writing for RTNDF, Steele and Tompkins argue for a moral mean saying that identifying juveniles can cause unjustified harm while avoiding crime stories with juveniles can ignore public issues. In general, they conclude that juveniles deserve special privacy protection, and they suggest news decision makers ask a series of questions about the severity of the crime, the importance of the story, and the juvenile's role in the story. Since, in this case, the juvenile discussed having "consensual sex" with Longman, his role is the story may have had an impact on the decision about whether to release his name.

Ultimately the decision on a juvenile's role in news stories may fall, once again, within a moral mean. Steele and Tompkins advise reporters in all cases to recognize the harm they may cause but to balance that against the goal of truth-telling.

Methodology

There are four television news organizations in the New Orleans market: WWL-TV (CBS affiliate), WDSU-TV (NBC affiliate), WVUE-TV (ABC affiliate), and WVUE-TV (Fox affiliate). At the time of the Longman arrest, all were presenting 30-minute newscasts at 5:00 pm, 6:00 pm, and 10:00 pm. In addition, WVUE-TV had a 30-minute newscast at 9:00 pm. On the day of the arrest, all of the newscasts except WVUE-TV's 9 pm report were recorded for later analysis. The coverage was then viewed in its entirety for analysis, contrasts, and comparisons.

In November of 2002, interviews were conducted with the news directors at WVUE-TV and WGNO-TV and with the executive producer of WDSU-TV. Since the writers were unsuccessful in reaching the news director at WWL-TV, her reactions to the coverage were taken from her quotes that appeared in the local newspaper, the *Times-Picayune.* Details about Longman's history, employment contract, and arrest were also taken from the *Times-Picayune* in addition to the newscasts.

The research attempted to answer these questions:

1. What rationales were in play in the newsroom decisions on the day of the arrest?
2. What did the news directors or other news managers know and when?
3. Did any structural variables, particularly the looming February ratings period, come into play in making the decisions?
4. How was the coverage similar and different on the newscasts of the four television stations?
5. Did codes of ethics inform any of the decisions? If so, which values seemed important?
6. Did the fact that Mike Longman was a media insider make a difference in each station's approach to the story? If so, how?
7. In the case of WVUE-TV and WWL-TV, how much did they "own" their employee, i.e., did they identify him as having been associated with them?

8. What external sources (lawyers, corporate officers, public relations firms) were consulted in preparing the coverage of the Longman arrest?

Findings

Rationales in play. All of the news managers spoke of objectivity, fairness, balance, and accuracy as values that came into play in making the news decisions about the Longman arrest. All also spoke of the extreme sensitivity of covering the arrest of a man they knew well. Esparros held a news department meeting, and told his staff ". . .this would be one of their toughest days as journalists: to cover a story that they were involved with. They had to show Mike no favoritism because they liked him, and to show him no more acrimony because they didn't. And that we would be tested for our ability to be fair and balanced more on this story than on any other story that they may have the opportunity to do. Opportunity is an interesting word. It's one of those management words. And I think if there was a goal it was, that when this was done, that people would look at us and say, 'They behaved as journalists'" (Esparros, 2002). Pendarvis said, "It was a day that made me sick to my stomach because I had to keep all these emotions in check in the newsroom and make sure that the story was covered the way we would cover any other story in its fairness, accuracy, and balance, those three things. We needed to make sure that we weren't going out of our way to protect Mike. He's a person I've known a very long time, and I've actually got positive feelings toward Mike. Because I've had lunch with this person and traveled with this person, I need to make sure I'm not going out of my way to make sure that this story was more fair, balanced, and accurate than it would be if it were somebody else" (Pendarvis, 2002). Hernandez said, "I'll tell you something. It was painful for those of us who know him, but again this is the point, you put your personal feelings aside and you just look at the facts. It was very difficult. Personally, I was challenged. Mike is a friend of mine, I know him, but I know I have to do the story" (Hernandez, 2002). Clearly, all realized the story was unusual in that it involved a fellow broadcast journalist.

Who knew what when. Though the news managers admitted that they knew Longman drank alcohol and lived a gay lifestyle, the news of his alleged criminal behavior was a surprise. Hernandez had not heard any rumors, and learned of the arrest on the day it happened (Hernandez, 2002). Pendarvis was told by someone on her staff that a reporter was going to be arrested in a sex scandal. She tried to confirm the report and get more information, but she failed. She found out the identity of the reporter and the charges against him on the day it happened (Pendarvis, 2002). Esparros began dealing with the story two days before it broke when sex crimes investigator Benelli called him and said he had an urgent message for Longman. Longman told Esparros that he might be arrested because he "went home with a guy" who turned out to be underaged. On Thursday, Longman told Esparros he had an attorney and that he might hold a news conference before he turned himself in. Esparros tried to talk Longman out of holding the news conference. The next morning, on his way to work, Esparros learned that Longman would be arrested on charges stemming from sex with juveniles. He called NOPD police spokesman Marlin DeFillo and recalled the following conversation: ""Let's go off the record. What are we talking about?' He said, 'It's bad.' I said, 'How bad. I understand it's one person.' He said, 'No. It's a number of people.' Repeated offenses with different people? Yes? All underage? We think so. And he said we also have confiscated videotapes. Videotapes of what? Videotapes of him having sex. How bad are the tapes? He said some of the worst stuff he's ever seen in his career. At that point I knew I was in for an awful day" (Esparros, 2002).

Structural variables in play. Esparros and Hernandez said there were no network affiliation or market size factors that influenced the way the story was covered on their stations. Pendarvis, however, had a competitive concern. "We were just heading into a ratings period. You think, this story is big news, people want to see it, but how do we identify this guy? Do we say the name of his TV station, and does that drive people to the other station" (Pendarvis, 2002). Esparros said the eminent ratings period played no role. "I'll cop a lot of guilt for doing stories that are somewhat geared to a Fox audience. I would be an absolute hypocrite if I told you I never do that. In this case, I wasn't worried, truly, and this is the only day you'll ever hear me say this, I wasn't worried about ratings. I was worried about living up to an image. I was really worried about getting through a difficult day without making a gaffe. I didn't want to see in the paper two days later that Fox 8 was overly compassionate or cut him some slack because I thought the newsroom's credibility was absolutely on the line and that a wrong move here could ruin us for years. And this is a station that had made lots of bad moves in the past, and we're still recovering from some of them" (Esparros, 2002).

Similarities and differences. All four television news stations began their newscasts with the Mike Longman arrest at 5:00 pm and 6:00 pm. At 10:00 pm, three of the four began their newscasts with Longman; his employer, WVUE-TV, chose the Edwards jury selection as their 10:00 pm lead with Longman following as the second story. Esparros (2002) said the reason for leading with Edwards at ten probably had to do with a newsroom strategy of leading with a different story at 9:00 pm and 10:00 pm. On the decision to begin with Longman at 5:00 pm and 6:00 pm, Esparros said, "I'm sure there was an appearance thing. We didn't want to be seen as someone who was going to back away from the story. It was also one of the (more) lurid tales that you'd see on any one day" (Esparros, 2002). Pendarvis and Hernandez concurred with Esparros's judgment, although both said if the Edwards trial had been in a phase other than jury selection the choice might have been more difficult.

In making the decision on what elements of the story to use and emphasize, the news managers had the following possibilities:

1. The NOPD news conference
2. The Mike Longman news conference
3. Longman's house (i.e., the alleged crime scene)
4. Longman's court appearance
5. Longman walking in several locations
6. Longman's career record
7. WVUE-TV statement

In addition, they approached the story from four possible news values:

1. Public interest
2. Sex and drugs
3. Longman's celebrity
4. The particulars of the crime

All of the newscasts studied used all four news values in their coverage. All of the stations used portions of the NOPD news conference and portions of the Longman's news conference. All but one station, WWL-TV, used video of Longman's house. One station, WGNO-TV, gave the actual address of the house by a reporter referring to "Longman's First Street home," and a few seconds later showing the street address. WVUE-TV showed the street address but did not mention the street, and WDSU-TV showed pictures of the house with no address. All of the stations had information from the Longman court appearance, but only WWL-TV and WDSU-TV discussed it in detail. All used video of Longman walking to various locations. Longman's career record was shown in detail on WVUE-TV, but the others referred to his long journalistic career in their descriptions of him. WVUE-TV ran a statement by Esparros, read on camera, in its entirety, while the other three used only quotations from the statement. WWL-TV ran a quotation from Esparros on only one newscast. All of the stations presented their coverage in live reports; three reports were live from police headquarters while one station, WGNO-TV, reported live from the news room.

Only two stations, WWL-TV and WDSU-TV, dealt with the issue of releasing the name of Longman's first accuser, the 15-year-old group home resident. Longman's attorney asked Judge Frank Marullo to order the release of the name and address of the accuser. Marullo ordered the release, citing the Constitution of the United States and saying an accused has a right to know who was charging him. Orleans Parish District Attorney Harry Connick objected, citing the Louisiana state confidentiality of juvenile crime victims laws. WWL-TV and WDSU-TV discussed the dispute in anchor tags; WDSU-TV showed a graphic quoting the state laws and promised they would abide by them. It is not clear whether the name of the accuser was released that day; in any case, none of the television stations reported it.

While all four stations used combinations of "justifications" for doing the story, their emphasis differed. Perennial ratings leader WWL-TV gave heavy emphasis to sex and drugs, and they spent the least amount of time on Longman's celebrity. At 5:00 pm, WWL-TV quoted high-ranking police officials as saying they had known Longman for years, and they made reference to Longman facing his colleagues in a news conference. The 5:00 pm lead began with the police department's appeal to get information about the young-looking males in the tapes seized at Longman's home (the public interest angle). At 6:00 and 10:00 pm, the Longman celebrity was played down, while the sex and drugs angle increased. WDSU-TV led its 5:00 pm with the police appeal/public interest angle, but at 6:00 and 10:00 pm the justification for the story became a combination of Longman's celebrity and sex and drugs. WVUE-TV spent much of its coverage on Longman's celebrity status; that justification was followed closely by the sex and drugs angle. WGNO-TV emphasized sex and drugs in all of its newscasts, followed by a focus on details of the crime. While all of the stations had elements of the crime story (proclamation of innocence, police and court procedures, the non-lurid crime details), only WGNO-TV used it as their second most-emphasized element. In general, all of the television stations emphasized the sex and drugs angle more at 10:00 pm than they did in earlier newscasts.

The importance of codes of ethics. The news managers praised professional codes of ethics but admitted they did not consult them on the day of the Longman arrest. Still, some of the tenets expressed in the codes of ethics were cited as guiding principles in making news coverage decisions is the Longman case. Hernandez said, "Every story we put on we definitely want to be fair, we want to be balanced, and we go with the facts.

We're not going to blow it into something it's not, we're not going to sensationalize it. I don't think we had any discussion on it but I know that that is an unspoken rule around this place, and I think a lot of people live up to it" (Hernandez, 2002). Pendarvis said, "This was a day when it was pretty basic. Fairness, accuracy, balance. Do we have all sides? Are we harming anyone who should not be harmed? There have been other times when I will actually pull the newsroom ethics book that I got from RTNDA and RTNDF, and I'll actually go look at it. Not that I follow these people's guidelines verbatim, but to generate discussions in the newsroom" (Pendarvis, 2002). Esparros said, "Some of the codes involve not letting outside influences affect your reporting, and that's a very tough one when you're in the middle of it. We even considered not covering the story, letting another station cover the story and ask them if we could air their report. We later figured that that would be an admission that we were incapable of covering it right, so we went the other way. We said, 'We'll cover it and we'll take the heat if there's heat to be taken'" (Esparros, 2002).

Longman as media insider. Esparros said he knew he knew he would cover Longman's arrest because Longman would be disappearing from the air. But as to how other media would handle it, Esparros had no predictions. "I didn't know how the media would play that. If it were anybody on the street, you might not even mention it, it might not make the news at all. And I always hate when news reporters become celebrities" (Esparros, 2002). However, the other two news managers found Longman's celebrity status a major factor in how they played the story. Hernandez said, "The simple fact that this person is a person of notoriety does add a little bit more weight to the story. Just for example, if a priest is arrested for having sex with a minor, as opposed to an average Joe, the story with the priest is going to have a little bit more of a factor of 'I can't believe that the person would do something like that'" (Hernandez, 2002). Pendarvis bounced the story off of a fellow news director, who helped her see that the story involved a person trusted in the community. "It was to completely treat Mike Longman as we would have treated the chairman of a bank or the CEO of a hospital, or the owner of a real estate agency. I had to keep everybody focused on how we would cover it if it were a teacher or a coach, a city councilman or the most prominent doctor in a hospital or if it was the guy who built the Mardi Gras floats" (Pendarvis, 2002).

WVUE-TV and WWL-TV and ownership of Longman. WVUE-TV ran a graphic showing Longman's resume, including his tenure at WWL-TV and WVUE-TV. WWL-TV's report made no mention of his employment at its station. In a newspaper story that appeared the day after the arrest, WWL-TV news director Sandy Breland defended her station's omission of Longman's employment at her station. "Had a businessman been arrested for the same crimes, we probably wouldn't have listed his past employers either. It didn't seem relevant," Breland said (Lorando, Perlstein, and Philbin, 2000, A-1). Another news manager found WWL-TV's position surprising. Pendarvis said, "What struck me was that WWL-TV never, ever claimed him. I found it odd" (Pendarvis, 2002). Esparros, who ran the resume graphic, said, "I'd be lying if I told you I didn't want people to know that he hadn't been here for his entire career. He was a longtime journalist in New Orleans who had worked at at least four stations. Did that make us look any better. I don't know. Maybe it did, maybe it didn't" (Esparros, 2002). Hernandez saw the WVUE-TV resume graphic as an attempt to prove he was an important journalist. She said, "Maybe they were trying to show the audience that here is someone who was a very upstanding person, very successful journalist and maybe they were using that to back up that claim, that this guy is a very successful guy at what he does" (Hernandez, 2002).

***Who was consulted*?** Neither Pendarvis nor Hernandez remembered legal issues with the Longman coverage, and neither consulted lawyers on the day of the arrest. Pendarvis spoke about the coverage with her corporate news director, but she said it was only because he was a trusted colleague whom she used as a sounding board. Esparros, facing what must have been the toughest story of his career, had no choice but to discuss the story with his corporate bosses because they were in town for an annual budget meeting. He said he would have called them had they not been in town. Esparros said he showed WVUE-TV's on air statement to attorneys before it was taped, and while he recalled the station hiring a public relations firm, he didn't recall whether professional public relations played a role in the coverage.

Conclusion

Three years after the fact, the news managers interviewed for this research project seemed willing to talk about the important decisions made on the day of Longman's arrest and could recall in great detail the discomfort of covering a story about a media insider. All could recall the ethical issues that presented themselves and values that were used to address the problems. Two of the news managers reviewed their newscast rundowns from the day before being interviewed. Since they remembered so many details so vividly, it might be assumed that the few things they don't remember may not be of great importance.

The Mike Longman story was clearly an example of non-routine news. Yet there were very few expressions of surprise expressed during the coverage. While expressions of surprise might have made the story more justified to the audience, the lack of those expressions may have reflected a desire to play this sensitive story as straight and "fact-driven" as possible. As with all non-routine stories, the coverage was given better play in the news of the day as evidenced by it being the lead story in eleven of the twelve newscasts studied. Also, there was clearly an indication that the news departments stretched their resources to assure the best coverage possible by assigning several different reporters and anchors to the story and by changing their emphasis from newscast-to-newscast.

From an ethical standpoint, the news stations appeared to try to stand in defensible moral ground. All of the news managers interviewed realized they had become part of the story; all admitted this story was different because they knew and had worked with Longman. And they all gave at least lip service to the accepted tenets of journalism ethics: accuracy, balance, fairness, and objectivity. They became part of a big story, but none used business and financial reasons for any of the decisions they made. Only Pendarvis admitted to being worried about the upcoming ratings period and how the story might affect it, but in the end, she decided to treat Longman as she would any other prominent member of the community.

Two of Matelski's limitations to television journalism ethical decision-making plagued the New Orleans newsrooms that day. Television news must use visuals to tell its stories, and that may explain why three of the four television stations used pictures of Longman's house even though the angry parents of juvenile victims could have found it and harmed Longman. When asked about that possibility, the news managers said they hadn't thought of it in those terms and that the house, to them, could be viewed as a crime scene. And if television news must be entertaining on some level, the heavily-emphasized sex and drugs aspect of this story could be easily explained. The arrest took place in the crucial days before the beginning of the February ratings period when attracting viewers is a paramount concern.

The issue of protecting the identities of juveniles was a minor one in this story. Only two stations mentioned the controversy of the name release, and none used the name. Had the juvenile's identity been known to the wider public, the ethical decisions required for this story could have become more complicated.

Finally, there appeared to be in play a certain amount of fear among the news managers that the sensitive story would not be handled correctly and that the news organization would be held in contempt by the public. This "fear factor" was an operating justification for covering the story and for handling it the way they did. It is possible that the "fear factor" may be functioning in many newsroom decisions, and it bears further observation and study.

The researchers believe they have contributed to the literature about the coverage of media insider scandals; to date, there is none other that deals with that specific newsroom challenge. For future study, researchers should attempt to interview news managers soon after the event to obtain their perspective and then repeat the interviews months or years in the future to determine how the perspectives change with time. An important product of additional research could be a list of guidelines for newsroom to help them in making decisions about covering cases like the Longman arrest.

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It's in the visuals!
Journalists and Gender Issues in Television Network News Coverage of the 1996 U.S. Presidential Election

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Radio-Television Journalism Division

ABSTRACT

It's in the visuals!
Journalists and Gender Issues in Television Network News Coverage of the 1996 U.S. Presidential Election

Content analysis of 157 election stories from ABC, CBS, and NBC found striking differences between news stories created by women and men. Women reporters were more likely to report on women's issues than men reporters. They were also more more likely to use gender-relevant verbal frames, refer to the "women's vote" and include more female sources in soundbites than men. An exploratory video content analysis method was also tested with promising results for future studies.

It's in the visuals!
Journalists and Gender Issues in Television Network News Coverage of the 1996 U.S. Presidential Election

A press release from the Center for the American Woman and Politics at Rutgers University the day following the 1996 U.S. Presidential Election proclaimed, "Women Make News as Voters, Edge Upward as Officeholders" (Walsh, 1996, p. 1). The lead sentence of the release reads, "Women once again made headlines in the 1996 elections, this time as voters, with women giving President Clinton his margin of victory" (p. 1). While this emphasis on the importance of the women's vote would be expected from a Center whose "mission is to promote greater knowledge and understanding about women's changing relationship to politics and government and to enhance women's influence and leadership in public life" (p. 2), the prominence of similar gender-specific news stories in the mainstream media is more indicative of the issue's salience in the 1996 Presidential Election.

During the campaign, all of the major television networks featured news stories highlighting the gender gap and/or the importance of the women's vote. The CBS "Evening News" on July 24, 1996, aired a story by reporter Sandra Hughes that focused on the women's vote and Republican Candidate Bob Dole's attempt to bridge the gender gap. On August 12, 1996, during coverage of the Republican National Convention on ABC's "World News Tonight," anchor Peter Jennings and political analyst Cokie Roberts discussed the Republicans' attempt to bridge the gender gap. That same week, on the August 13, 1996, NBC "Nightly News" program, anchor Tom Brokaw provided poll results detailing President Clinton's lead among women voters over candidate Dole, followed by a four minute news package by reporter Lisa Myers titled, "In Depth: Republican Convention: Gender Gap." And on CNN's evening news on November 6, 1996, anchors Bernard Shaw and Judy Woodruff cited statistics on the women's vote.

Although this sample of stories does not represent all types of news media, it does seem to support Norris's (1997) contention that "gender is one of the primary fault-lines running through contemporary American politics" (p. 1). In *Women, Media, and Politics,* Norris (1997) contends that political issues involving gender divide politicians, parties, and voters in the United States. Additionally, she raises questions about the way media cover gender politics, how women journalists are faring at the end of the 1990s, and whether or not the growth of women in newsrooms has influenced news coverage. The purpose of this study is to examine network television news coverage of the 1996 Presidential Election for gender factors that relate to women's involvement in the political process. Additionally, this study is designed to explore the visual images associated with the audio component of these election stories. The study attempts to answer these questions as they relate to television network news coverage of the 1996 Presidential Election Campaign. This election is appropriate for a gender-based study because of the notable eleven-percentage-point split between men and women voters (Connelly, 1996).

The significance of the study

This is an important area of study because little systematic research has focused on the mainstream news media's coverage of gender politics in the 1996 Presidential Election. In fact, it is routinely excluded from analysis. For example, Domke et al. (1998) conducted an extensive study on the "News media, candidates and issues, and public opinion in the 1996 presidential campaign" and did not include any specific analysis of the women's vote or gender issues. The issue categories developed for this study were character, pocketbook, ideology, social policy, civil liberties, foreign affairs, political reform, and horse race, with no separate mention of how gender issues might impact public opinion.

Interestingly, the authors used these examples to explain their research design. "An example of text that would have been scored pro-Clinton is this statement: 'Clinton has been successful at attracting women voters'...For example, the statement 'Clinton has not been successful at attracting women voters' would have been coded as con-Clinton" (p. 722). As a result of the study, the researchers concluded that "the evidence strongly indicates that news media coverage, *alone*, explained a substantial portion of the variance in the public's preference for either Clinton or Dole in 1996" (p. 733). This conclusion, along with the gender differential in voting patterns mentioned above, lends support to the need for additional research about how mainstream news media cover gender politics.

This study adds to the existing body of knowledge by systematically analyzing political news stories aired on the evening newscasts of the mainstream television networks: ABC, CBS, and NBC. Television news warrants analysis because it continues to be the medium where the majority of Americans say they receive news (Jamieson and Campbell, 1997). Although voters were less likely to get their news from television during the 1996 Presidential election campaign than they were in the 1992 campaign (72% versus 82%), television news was still the leading source of campaign information (Pew Research Center, 1996).

There is also evidence that television news coverage of the 1996 Presidential Election was better than in recent prior elections. Graber (1998) discussed these improvements following a retrospective of the campaign attended by academics, pollsters, and news media representatives:

> The changes in issue coverage in the 1996 campaign satisfied several of the demands for reform that had been widely aired by scholars and pundits. Stories were made more meaningful by placing them into richer contexts and by emphasizing their relevance to average citizens. The time devoted to issue coverage was expanded, as was the time given to candidates for making their cases in their own words. The tunnel vision favoring beltway elites was replaced by broader perspectives on politics from other parts of the country and from other types of people. (p. 119)

This expansion of issue coverage noted in televised election news, combined with an increased emphasis on multiple political perspectives, should make a gender-relevant[1] study even more meaningful by asking, how does the increased salience of the women's vote and gender-related issues play out in television news content, both verbally and visually? The stories will be analyzed for a number of gender factors, including sources used as soundbites, issues covered, which aspects of issues were covered, and from what perspective, as well as whether any of these gender factors can be linked to the gender of the journalist writing the story. This approach illuminates similarities and differences between the stories created by women and men television journalists.

When women journalists covering the 1996 Presidential Election campaign were asked whether or not women report the news differently than men, opinions were mixed. Woodruff

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[1] Gender-relevant is defined as labeling, categorizing, or describing people or issues with a specific reference to being male/female. This would include references which are gender specific by definition, such as wife, mother, daughter, matronly, etc. for women or husband, father, son, patronly, etc. for men. Gender-neutral is defined as labeling, categorizing, or describing people or issues with no reference to being male/female.

(1997) quotes Susan Page of *USA Today* as saying "the sex of a reporter is no longer relevant. 'The battle has been fought and won in terms of getting women into high profile political reporting jobs'" (p. 3). Woodruff also quotes CNN's Candy Crowley as saying, "The bottom line is that journalists think alike; having journalism in common is a stronger bond than the differences that result from gender" (p. 3). On the other hand, Woodruff notes that some reporters feel women provide a different perspective on certain issues. "NBC's Gwen Ifill says women reporters are more likely to identify with the plight of women welfare recipients and to be more interested in the subject of welfare reform. The *New York Times'* Katherine Seelye says women are more sensitive to questions about abortion and more sympathetic to calls for family and medical leave for working parents" (p. 3). Woodruff concludes by saying:

> Yet the idea of going a few steps further, and actively "pushing" a women's agenda is rejected by most female political reporters. They acknowledge that their antennae may be more attuned to some issues, but not to the point of advocacy. The year 1996 may have been the first year that women voters determined the outcome of a presidential election, but it wasn't because women reporters were pleading their case. In fact, as Feeney (Susan Feeney of the *Dallas Morning News*) notes, women reporters didn't need to bring up so-called women's issues like education, the war on drugs, and family leave because the Clinton campaign was appealing "to soccer moms every 15 minutes." (p. 4)

Woodruff also reports that in 1996, more than one-third of the reporters covering Bob Dole and Bill Clinton on a regular basis were women.

Literature Review

As noted by Graber (1987), the visual nature of television news messages had been routinely ignored by researchers through the mid-1980s. She challenged the results of television content analysis research in which only the words on television news transcripts were studied and called for audio-visual coding. Graber developed "gestalt coding" as a method to address the meanings conveyed by television messages. "The major factors considered during gestalt coding are: (1) the general political context prevailing at the time of the broadcast; (2) the anchor's lead in and subsequent anchor and reporter verbal and non-verbal editorializing; (3) the audio-visual message conveyed by the combination of words, non-verbal sounds, and pictures; and (4) the interactive effect among episodes within the same news story and among stories in the same newscast" (pp. 74-75).

Graber (1990) then used "gestalt coding" procedures in a study which analyzed 189 television network news stories with political themes which aired during the first two weeks in February, 1985. First the verbal themes were coded, followed by coding of shots within the story. Then coders identified the general theme or "gestalt" of the story based on the overall meaning conveyed by a combination of the audio and video, plus they considered the placement and context of the story. Graber reported intercoder reliability coefficients in the .80 range. Based on this analysis, she concluded that the short length of television news stories makes it difficult for people to learn from them and that the types of scenes used for television stories are notable for their stereotypical, routine approaches. Despite these drawbacks, however, the research also indicated that visuals did convey a great deal of information.

There is now a growing body of research addressing the visual component of television news but most of these studies have not attempted to integrate both the visual and audio component or they defy systematic quantitative content analysis. Grabe, Zhou, and Barnett (1998) analyzed the content and visual form of news segments on "60 Minutes" and "Hard Copy" but limited their non-video content analysis to story topics alone. This content analysis found striking differences between the two programs. "60 Minutes" covered political news most prominently and relied on less intrusive visual production techniques. "Hard Copy" focused more on the lives of celebrities, featured more negatively compelling visual material about sex, gore, and violence, and used "flamboyant production techniques (or 'structural features') such as slow motion, digital editing effects, music, and obtrusive voice tone during reporting..." (p. 3).

Grabe (1996) also did a systematic content analysis of the visual structures of the South African Broadcasting Corporation's election coverage in 1987 and 1989 and found visual indicators of bias; however, the verbal component of these news programs was excluded from the content analysis. Kepplinger (1982) analyzed the television camera positions used in the video of news stories about two candidates for the office of Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany in the 1976 election, along with verbal statements made by journalists. This study did find evidence of a negative bias in the visual presentation but not in the verbal presentation. Both of these researchers developed visual bias measures based on a well-established body of visual communication media aesthetics research.

As noted by Metallinos (1996), there are standard compositional rules or production techniques that should be followed in order to create high quality television video. These rules cover such things as lighting, camera movement, and camera angles. For example, when people are the subject of television shots, they will appear differently on the screen, depending on if the camera is shooting them at, below, or above their eye level. Zettl (1990) describes this effect:

> When we look up with the camera (sometimes called low-angle or a below eye-level point of view), the object or event seems more important, more

> powerful, more authoritative than when we look at it straight on (normal angle or eye-level point of view), or looking down on it (high angle, or above eye-level point of view). When we look down with the camera, the object generally loses somewhat in significance; it becomes less powerful, less important, than when we look at it straight on or from below. (pp. 216-218)

Adams (1992) calls the eye level shot a neutral angle that "adds no meaning and is typically used to present straightforward information, as in an interview. A less-than-neutral angle is often used to give a specific meaning to the shot" (p. 179). In order to minimize the possibility of visual bias in television news, Shook (2000) writes "the rule of thumb is to photograph people at eye level, and to show two eyes" (p. 48).

These structural rules were used successfully by Shidler, Lowry, and Kingsley (1998) in a television network news content analysis of the 1992 and 1996 Presidential Campaigns to determine if video shots were positive, neutral, or negative based on a combination of camera angle and appearance. The study found that positive visual images of the candidates far outweighed the negative images; however the study was limited because only edited video shots were analyzed and not the accompanying audio tracks or sound bites.

Sound bites, individually, have been the subject of content analysis (See for example: Cutbirth & Coombs, 1999; Hallin, 1992; Lowry & Shidler, 1995). These studies documented the fact that the average length of television news sound bites has declined from 43 seconds in 1968 to 9 seconds in 1988. Hallin (1992) interprets this change "as part of a general shift in the style of television news toward a more mediated, journalist-centered form of Journalism" (p. 5).

Steele and Barnhurst (1996) expanded upon Hallin's (1992) study by analyzing the work of television news anchors and reporters during the U.S. Presidential campaigns from 1968 to

1988. The researchers found that as sound bites got shorter, journalists own speaking time was reduced but by a smaller margin. They also found that television anchors appeared to dominate the news by interviewing other reporters and by making more judgments and evaluative comments about campaign events. Steele and Barnhurst (1996) called this "the journalism of opinion" (p. 13) and agreed that journalism had become more journalist-centered.

Similarly, Zhou (1999) did a comparison study of candidate sound bites and television reporter stand-ups in the 1996 Presidential Election and found that journalists were on camera for longer periods of time than the candidates.[2] While the average sound bite was 8.4 seconds, the average reporter stand-up was 18.3 seconds, leading Zhou to conclude that the journalists, not the candidates, were the primary communicators in the stories.

In another subsequent study, Barnhurst and Steele (1997) analyzed the visual coverage of U.S. Presidential elections from 1968 to 1992. They found "that shots of journalists did appear more frequently and for shorter periods. The scale of a journalists' image also grew larger or more imposing, before more impressive backdrops on screen" (p. 42). They also determined the video became more fast paced and that "journalists inserted a much larger number of video clips, graphics, and captions in each report" (p. 47). The researchers also noted that during the time frame of their study, "national news became more lively and appealing and drew large audiences" (p. 56).

No studies were found that incorporated gender issues or the concept of gender-relevant framing in relation to television news video, although the number of female versus male news sources and number of women versus men reporters has been counted (Larson & Bailey, 1998; Liebler & Smith, 1997; Women, Men & Media, 1998). Also, despite an increased emphasis on visual analysis of television news, there has been little systematic content analysis incorporating both the audio and video portion of the message. This can be seen as problematic because, as numerous studies have shown (See for example: Crigler, Just, & Neuman, 1994; Drew & Grimes, 1987), both audio and video channels are important for the recall of television viewers. According to Crigler et al. (1994), "The results suggest that the power of television as a medium that grabs attention and is emotionally involving derives not simply from the visuals but from the *combination* of audio and visual stimuli" (p. 146).

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[2] According to Shook (2000), the stand-up in a news package occurs when "a reporter in the field delivers one or more sentences of dialogue while appearing on camera" (p. 353).

Based on the information contained in the previously detailed gender-related research, the following research questions were developed for the television news election study:

1. Are women reporters more likely to report on women's issues, stories with topics typically identified as relevant to women and children, than men reporters?

2. Will women reporters be more likely to use gender-relevant verbal frames than men reporters?

3. Will women reporters be more likely to refer to the importance of the women's vote than men reporters?

4. Will women reporters be more likely to rely on references to the physical appearance of news sources and subjects than men reporters?

5. Will women reporters be more likely to rely on references to the familial or marital status of the male candidates than men reporters?

6. Are women reporters more likely to include female sources in soundbites in their stories than men reporters?

7. Will women reporters be more likely to include regular people as sources in soundbites than men reporters?

8. Will stories featuring women reporters have more negative soundbite shots than stories featuring men reporters?

9. Will stories featuring a gender-relevant verbal frame have more negative soundbite shots than stories with a gender-neutral frame?

10. Will stories featuring a gender-relevant verbal frame have more negative non-soundbite video shots than positive shots?

11. Will stories that refer to the importance of the women's vote have more negative non-soundbite video shots than positive shots?

12. Will stories featuring a gender-relevant frame have more shots in which the audio and video do not match than stories with a gender-neutral frame?

Method

The method used was a content analysis of verbal and visual components of the population of U.S. Presidential Election television news packages aired weekdays on the early evening newscasts of ABC, CBS, and NBC for the 12 week period between August 5, 1996, and October 25, 1996. News packages were selected for analysis because they typically feature an individual reporter telling the story from his or her own perspective. The August 5, 1996, start date was chosen so that both parties' national conventions would be included in the study. The specific videotaped election news reports included in the study were identified during a search of the daily newscast rundowns obtained from the Television News Archive at Vanderbilt University.[3]

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[3] The Television News Archive at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN, can be accessed via the Internet [http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/index.html].

The population totalled 157 stories and included 55 packages from ABC's "World News Tonight," 56 packages from CBS's "Evening News," and 46 packages from NBC's "Nightly News." The coding involved viewing the videotaped news packages obtained on VHS tape from the Television News Archive at Vanderbilt University, reviewing the written newscast rundowns, and determining time with a stop watch. The written transcripts of the news stories from the *Nexis* document service were also accessed whenever they were available.

Once the population of news packages was identified, a four-part content analysis coding scheme was designed to address the television news research questions. (See Appendix A for the complete coding scheme.) The author was the primary coder for this content analysis and a colleague coded a random sample of 18 stories, representing 11% of the overall population of stories to assess the post hoc reliability of the coding scheme. For this study, Krippendorff's Reliability program, v 3.12a, was used to calculate intercoder reliability levels for all 53 variable units for 18 stories, six from each network. From this, an overall coder agreement level of .95 was calculated. After the coding was completed, the content analysis data were analyzed using the *SPSS 7.5* program.

Findings

There were 33 television journalists who contributed packages that were analyzed for content during this study. This included 22 (67%) men journalists and 11 (33%) women journalists, percentages which directly correspond to the two-thirds, one-third ratio of men to women journalists noted in the Weaver and Wilhoit (1996) survey of national journalists. When journalists from the different networks were analyzed, we see that NBC has the same ratio of men to women journalists (67% to 33%), while the ABC ratio of men to women journalists includes slightly more women (64% to 36%) and the CBS ratio of men to women journalists includes slightly more men (69% to 31%).

Additionally, men anchored over 90% of the newscasts analyzed in this study and were featured in a higher number of packages than women. Of the 157 packages coded in this study, 118 (75%) featured men reporters, compared to 39 (25%) that featured women reporters. The packages featuring men journalists were also more likely to be the lead story in the newscast or located within the first segment after the lead than packages featuring women journalists (67% to 49%). In other words, just over half (51%) of the packages featuring women journalists were located in the second segment of the newscast after the commercial break or later. The different male-to-female ratios noted here do allow for comparisons based on gender and lead to the discussion of the research questions.

1. Are women reporters more likely to report on women's issues, stories with topics typically identified as relevant to women and children, than men reporters?

Story topic was coded first into 17 main topic areas with an option to code a secondary topic from the same 17 topic areas. The topic area covering candidate qualifications, poll standings, political strategies, campaign tactics, and campaign finance was the main topic in 97 (61.8%) packages and the secondary topic in another 30 (19.1%) packages. This finding is consistent with prior research (Graber, 1997) which has shown that election news stories, regardless of the medium, are much more likely to focus on candidates and their chances for election rather than on specific issues. When specific issues were examined in this study, women were more likely to report on the topic areas of welfare and social security, race, gender and affirmative action, and abortion than their male colleagues (28% to 7%) while men reporters were slightly more likely to cover economic growth, the budget deficit, and tax issues than their female colleagues (8.5% to 3%).

Additionally, each package was analyzed for any reference to a women's issue, defined as an issue that primarily affects females in society, such as reproductive health, family planning, abortion, childcare, sexual harassment, rape, sexual discrimination, domestic violence, feminism. While over 80% of the packages contained no reference to a women's issue, in the 30 (19.1%) packages that did contain such a reference, women journalists were much more likely to include a reference to a women's issue than men (See Table 1).

Table 1

Reporter Gender * Is there a reference to a women's issue? Crosstabulation

			Is there a reference to a women's issue?		
			Yes	No	Total
Reporter Gender	Female	Count	15	24	39
		% within Reporter Gender	38.5%	61.5%	100.0%
	Male	Count	15	103	118
		% within Reporter Gender	12.7%	87.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	30	127	157
		% within Reporter Gender	19.1%	80.9%	100.0%

Phi = .283 Approx. Sig. = .000

2. Will women reporters be more likely to use gender-relevant verbal frames than men reporters?

As noted earlier, gender-neutral is defined as labeling, categorizing, or describing people or issues with no reference to being male/female. Gender-relevant does include a specific reference to being male/female, including references which are gender specific by definition, such as wife, mother, daughter, matronly, etc. for women or husband, father, son, patronly, etc. for men. Each package was coded as gender-neutral; gender-relevant, but the story **only** includes a reference to a person's spouse as "his wife" or "her husband"; or gender-relevant in any other context. This coding eliminated simple spousal references from the gender-relevant category under study. As shown in Table 2, gender-relevant verbal frames not including spousal references were noted in 34 (21.7%) packages, and women reporters were much more likely to include gender-relevant frames in their stories than men.

Table 2

Reporter Gender * Is the frame gender-neutral or gender-relevant? Crosstabulation

			Is the frame gender-neutral or gender-relevant?			
			Gender-neutral	Gender-relevant, only a spouse mention	Gender-relevant in any other context	Total
Reporter Gender	Female	Count	24		15	39
		% within Reporter Gender	61.5%		38.5%	100.0%
	Male	Count	96	3	19	118
		% within Reporter Gender	81.4%	2.5%	16.1%	100.0%
Total		Count	120	3	34	157
		% within Reporter Gender	76.4%	1.9%	21.7%	100.0%

Cramer's V = .243 Approx. Sig. = .010

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3. Will women reporters be more likely to refer to the importance of the women's vote than men reporters?

There was a direct reference to the value or importance of the women's vote in the 1996 election in only 12 (7.6%) of the packages, with no such reference in the other 145 (92.4%) packages. When this direct reference did occur, women reporters were more likely than men reporters to make such a reference (See Table 3).

4. Will women reporters be more likely to rely on references to the physical appearance of news sources and subjects than men reporters?

A comparison of the frequency distributions of references to the physical appearance of female or male sources shows that reporters made more references to the physical appearance or attire of Bill Clinton and Bob Dole than they did to other male or female sources, but references to physical appearance in any way were minimal.

Table 3

Reporter Gender * Is the importance of the women's vote mentioned? Crosstabulation

			Is the importance of the women's vote mentioned?		Total
			Yes	No	
Reporter Gender	Female	Count	8	31	39
		% within Reporter Gender	20.5%	79.5%	100.0%
	Male	Count	4	114	118
		% within Reporter Gender	3.4%	96.6%	100.0%
Total		Count	12	145	157
		% within Reporter Gender	7.6%	92.4%	100.0%

Phi = .278 Approx. Sig. = .000

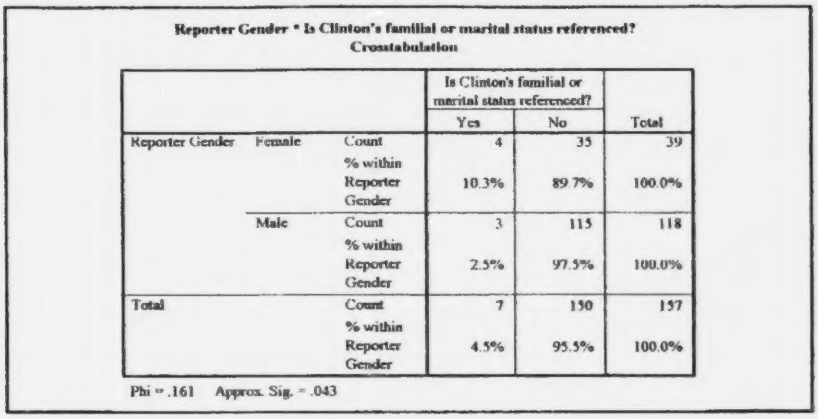
And, there was no support for the question about women reporters being more likely to rely on references to physical appearance than men.

5. Will women reporters be more likely to rely on references to the familial or marital status of the male candidates than men reporters?

A comparison of frequency distributions shows that reporters made references to the familial or marital status of either Bill Clinton or Bob Dole in less than 5% of their stories. However, when those references occurred, women reporters were slightly more likely to make them than men reporters (See Tables 4 and 5).

Most of the references to Bill Clinton and Bob Dole's familial or marital status occurred in packages which emphasized the campaign efforts of their wives, and these packages usually featured women reporters. For example, just two weeks before the election, NBC News profiled the campaign efforts of Elizabeth Dole and Hillary Clinton. On October 21, 1996, reporter Lisa Myers characterized Bob Dole's wife as "the best campaigner on the Dole-Kemp-Dole ticket" and said, "Though she would never say so, Elizabeth Dole has everything her husband lacks, a laser-like focus, pizzazz, even charisma." On October 22, 1996, NBC's Gwen Ifill did a profile on Hillary Clinton and her efforts to avoid controversy while campaigning. Ifill characterized Bill Clinton's wife as "the tough-minded First Lady who's counting on four more years" and said, "She's careful to appear her husband's helpmate, not the nation's co-President." Here we see two packages by women reporters that emphasize the familial and marital status of the candidates.

Table 4

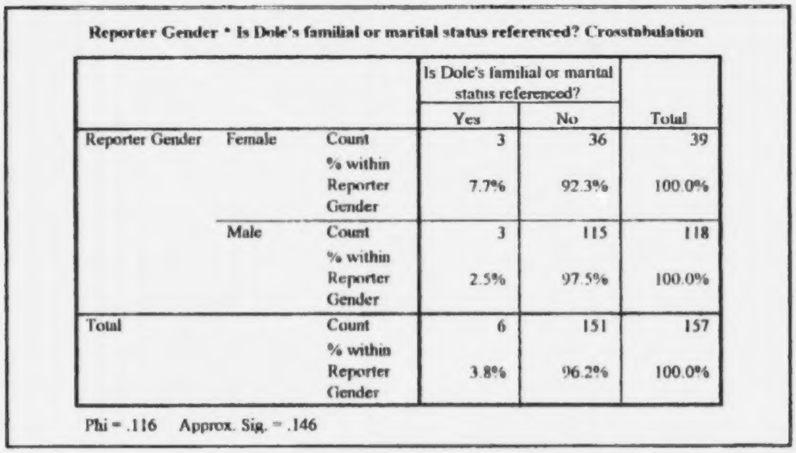


Reporter Gender * Is Clinton's familial or marital status referenced? Crosstabulation

			Is Clinton's familial or marital status referenced?		
			Yes	No	Total
Reporter Gender	Female	Count	4	35	39
		% within Reporter Gender	10.3%	89.7%	100.0%
	Male	Count	3	115	118
		% within Reporter Gender	2.5%	97.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	7	150	157
		% within Reporter Gender	4.5%	95.5%	100.0%

Phi = .161 Approx. Sig. = .043

Table 5



Reporter Gender * Is Dole's familial or marital status referenced? Crosstabulation

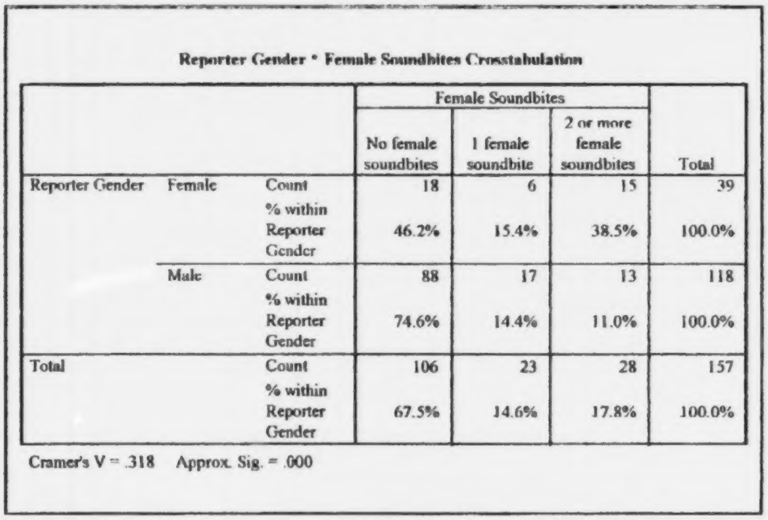
			Is Dole's familial or marital status referenced?		
			Yes	No	Total
Reporter Gender	Female	Count	3	36	39
		% within Reporter Gender	7.7%	92.3%	100.0%
	Male	Count	3	115	118
		% within Reporter Gender	2.5%	97.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	6	151	157
		% within Reporter Gender	3.8%	96.2%	100.0%

Phi = .116 Approx. Sig. = .146

6. Are women reporters more likely to include female sources in soundbites in their stories than men reporters?

There were 678 soundbites in the 157 coded packages, representing an average of about four sources per package (M=4.32). About 23% (158) of the total soundbites were soundbites of women, with an average of about one female soundbite per package (M=1.01). A crosstabulation also shows that in about two-thirds of the packages, no female soundbites appear, regardless of the gender of the reporter (See Table 6). In the case of men reporters, they included soundbites of women in only one-fourth of their packages, compared to women reporters who included soundbites of women in almost 54% of their packages. Women reporters were more likely to include two or more soundbites of women per story than their male colleagues. Female soundbites were originally coded based on the total appearing in the package but were recoded as none, one and two or more for ease of comparison in the crosstabulation.

Table 6



Reporter Gender * Female Soundbites Crosstabulation

			Female Soundbites			
			No female soundbites	1 female soundbite	2 or more female soundbites	Total
Reporter Gender	Female	Count	18	6	15	39
		% within Reporter Gender	46.2%	15.4%	38.5%	100.0%
	Male	Count	88	17	13	118
		% within Reporter Gender	74.6%	14.4%	11.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	106	23	28	157
		% within Reporter Gender	67.5%	14.6%	17.8%	100.0%

Cramer's V = .318 Approx. Sig. = .000

7. Will women reporters be more likely to include regular people as sources in soundbites than men reporters?

In this study, regular people were included as soundbite sources 153 times, representing about 23% of the total of 678 soundbites. However, in nearly 80% (125) of the total packages,

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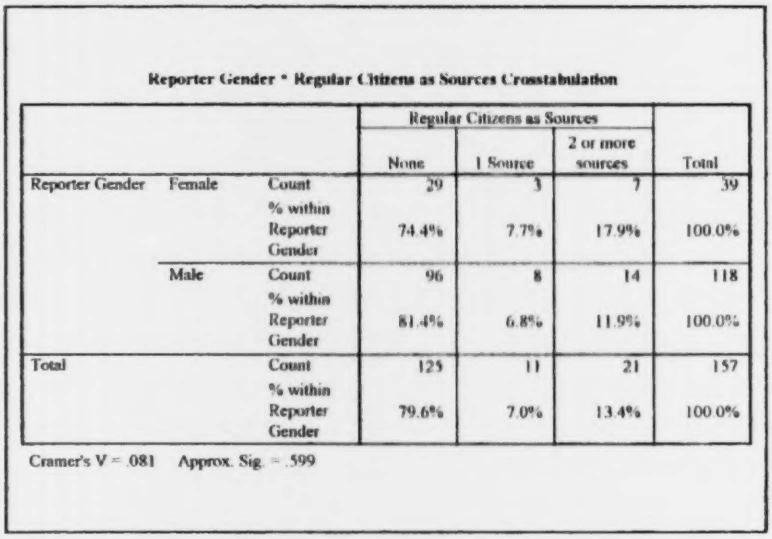
there were no soundbites featuring regular people. The average number of soundbites featuring regular people came out to about one per story (M= .97), compared to an average of nearly three soundbite sources of officials per story (M= 2.77). And the data indicate that women reporters were slightly more likely to include regular people as soundbite sources than men reporters (See Table 7).

Table 7



Reporter Gender * Regular Citizens as Sources Crosstabulation

			Regular Citizens as Sources			
			None	1 Source	2 or more sources	Total
Reporter Gender	Female	Count	29	3	7	39
		% within Reporter Gender	74.4%	7.7%	17.9%	100.0%
	Male	Count	96	8	14	118
		% within Reporter Gender	81.4%	6.8%	11.9%	100.0%
Total		Count	125	11	21	157
		% within Reporter Gender	79.6%	7.0%	13.4%	100.0%

Cramer's V = .081 Approx. Sig. = .599

8. Will stories featuring women reporters have more negative soundbite shots than stories featuring men reporters?

The video quality of the majority of soundbite shots as defined in the coding procedure was neutral, with 71% (479) of the soundbites being medium shots, camera at eye level, subject's expression was positive or focused intently. Of the remaining soundbite shots, 26% (177) were negative as defined in the coding procedure as being long shots or side-view shots, camera tilting downward (a high angle shot), with the subject appearing angry, tense, tired, or tentative. Only

3% (22) of the soundbites were positive as defined in the coding procedure as being a close-up or medium shot, camera tilted up (a low angle shot), with the subject appearing confident, enthusiastic, relaxed, and maybe smiling.

When the video quality of the soundbites for the separate candidates and other men and women sources was examined, it was noted that soundbites featuring women sources had the highest percentage of both negative and positive video. Bob Dole had the next highest percentage of negative soundbite shots, but tied with other male sources for having the lowest percentage of positive soundbite shots. Bill Clinton had only 10% (8) negative soundbite shots and the largest percentage (86%) of neutral shots (See Table 8).

Table 8

Video Quality of Soundbites

	Negative Bites	**Positive Bites**	**Neutral Bites**	**Total**
Bill Clinton	**8 (10%)**	**3 (4%)**	**69 (86%)**	**80 (100%)**
Bob Dole	**56 (30%)**	**3 (2%)**	**122 (68%)**	**181 (100%)**
Women Sources	**49 (31%)**	**11 (7%)**	**98 (62%)**	**158 (100%)**
Other Men Sources	**64 (24%)**	**5 (2%)**	**190 (74%)**	**259 (100%)**
Totals	**177 (26%)**	**22 (3%)**	**479 (71%)**	**678 (100%)**

When all of the stories with the negative soundbite shots were combined into another variable for additional analysis, there was no systematic indication that stories featuring women reporters had more negative soundbite shots than stories featuring men reporters. As shown in Table 9, women reporters had a slightly higher percentage of stories containing no negative soundbite shots than men reporters. And while women had about the same percentage of stories with one negative soundbite as men, they had a slightly lower percentage of stories with two or more negative soundbite shots than men reporters.

Table 9

Reporter Gender * Stories with Negative Bites Crosstabulation

			Stories with Negative Bites			Total
			None	1	2 or more	
Reporter Gender	Female	Count	18	12	9	39
		% within Reporter Gender	46.2%	30.8%	23.1%	100.0%
	Male	Count	50	34	34	118
		% within Reporter Gender	42.4%	28.8%	28.8%	100.0%
Total		Count	68	46	43	157
		% within Reporter Gender	43.3%	29.3%	27.4%	100.0%

Cramer's V = .056 Approx. Sig. = .784

9. Will stories featuring a gender-relevant verbal frame have more negative soundbite shots than stories with a gender-neutral frame?

A crosstabulation of these variables indicates that nearly 65% (24) of the stories containing a gender-relevant frame do feature negative soundbite shots, compared to only 54% (65) of the stories containing a gender-neutral frame. In other words, stories with a gender-neutral frame were more likely to have no negative soundbites than stories with a gender-relevant frame. However, as shown in Table 10, stories with a gender-neutral frame were somewhat more likely to have one negative soundbite than stories with a gender-relevant frame but this changes as the number of negative soundbites increase per story. Slightly more than

40% of the stories with a gender-relevant frame contained two or more negative soundbite shots, compared to about 23% for stories with a gender-neutral frame.

Table 10

Gender-relevant Frame * Stories with Negative Bites Crosstabulation

			Stories with Negative Bites			Total
			None	1	2 or more	
Gender-relevant Frame	Gender-neutral	Count	55	37	28	120
		% within Gender-relevant Frame	45.8%	30.8%	23.3%	100.0%
	Gender-relevant	Count	13	9	15	37
		% within Gender-relevant Frame	35.1%	24.3%	40.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	68	46	43	157
		% within Gender-relevant Frame	43.3%	29.3%	27.4%	100.0%

Cramer's V = .164 Approx. Sig. = .122

10. Will stories featuring a gender-relevant verbal frame have more negative non-soundbite video shots than positive shots?

As outlined in the coding procedure, stories were only analyzed for non-soundbite video quality if they contained a gender-relevant frame or if the importance of the women's vote was referred to in the story. This limitation was imposed to make the coding process more manageable. For this analysis, the quality of a non-soundbite shot was coded as neutral if it was a medium shot, camera shooting level, with the subject(s) appearing without a positive or negative expression or, if no people were in the shot, if the content had no remarkable quality. The quality of a non-soundbite shot was coded as negative if it was a long shot or side-view shot, camera tilting downward (a high angle shot), with the subject(s) appearing angry, tense, tired, or

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tentative or, if no people were in the shot, if the content had a substantial negative quality. The quality of a non-soundbite video shot was coded as positive if it was a close-up or medium shot, camera tilted up (a low angle shot), with the subject(s) appearing confident, enthusiastic, relaxed, and maybe smiling or, if no people were in the shot, if the content had a significant positive quality.

In the 37 stories that contained any type of gender-relevant verbal frame, there were 691 non-soundbite video shots, which represented an average of 18.68 shots per story. As shown in Table 11, the quality of most of the non-soundbite video shots was either positive (41%) or neutral (40%), with only 19% of the shots being negative.

Table 11

Video Quality of Non-soundbite Shots in Stories with a Gender-relevant Frame

	N	Mean	Sum
Gender-relevant Neutral Shots	37	7.38	273 (40%)
Gender-relevant Positive Shots	37	7.68	285 (41%)
Gender-relevant Negative Shots	37	3.62	134 (19%)
Totals		18.68	691 (100%)

Consequently, there is no reason to believe that stories with a gender-relevant verbal frame will have more negative non-soundbite video shots than positive shots.

11. Will stories that refer to the importance of the women's vote have more negative non-soundbite video shots than positive shots?

Using the same coding procedures and definitions as in the prior section, the quality of non-soundbite video was also analyzed if the importance of the women's vote was noted anywhere in the story. In the 12 stories that contained a reference to the importance of the women's vote, there were 267 non-soundbite video shots, which represented an average of 22.25 shots per story. Here again, the quality of the bulk of non-soundbite video shots was positive (44%) or neutral (42%) with only 14% in the negative category (See Table 12).

Table 12

Video Quality of Non-soundbite Shots in Stories Noting the Importance of the Women's Vote

	N	Mean	Sum
Women's Vote - Neutral Shots	12	9.25	111 (42%)
Women's Vote-Positive Shots	12	9.83	118 (44%)
Women's Vote-Negative Shots	12	3.17	38 (14%)
Totals		22.25	267 (100%)

12. Will stories featuring a gender-relevant frame have more shots in which the audio and video do not match than stories with a gender-neutral frame?

The final content analysis category involved counting the number of shots in which the audio and video did not match. This was designed to identify any potential for bias caused by discrepancies in audio and video messages. However, the number of occurrences of this was minimal with only 6 stories containing one shot in which the audio and video did not match. As shown in Table 13, stories featuring a gender-relevant frame do have more shots in which the audio and video do not match than stories with a gender-neutral frame but the small number of total stories and shots involved makes these differences insignificant. This also indicates that the network news packages analyzed from the 1996 Presidential Election had complementary audio and video messages, which is considered to be the most effective way to communicate in television news (Crigler, Just, & Neuman, 1994; Drew & Grimes, 1987).

Table 13

Gender-relevant Frame * Audio-Video Discrepancies Crosstabulation

			Audio-Video Discrepancies		Total
			0	1	
Gender-relevant Frame	Gender-neutral	Count	118	2	120
		% within Gender-relevant Frame	98.3%	1.7%	100.0%
	Gender-relevant	Count	33	4	37
		% within Gender-relevant Frame	89.2%	10.8%	100.0%
Total		Count	151	6	157
		% within Gender-relevant Frame	96.2%	3.8%	100.0%

Phi = .202 Approx. Sig. = .011

To summarize, the data did result in positive responses to 8 of the 12 research questions. Based on the population of television news packages analyzed for this study, women reporters from ABC, CBS, and NBC were more likely to report on women's issues - stories with topics typically identified as relevant to women and children - than men reporters. Women were also more likely to use gender-relevant verbal frames, to refer to the importance of the women's vote, to refer to the familial or marital status of the male candidates, to include more female sources in soundbites, and to include more regular people as sources in soundbites than men. However, women reporters were not more likely to rely on references to physical appearance of news sources than men reporters. In fact, regardless of the type of source or the gender of the reporter, the inclusion of any references to physical appearance was minimal.

In terms of soundbite quality, there was no indication that stories featuring women reporters had more negative soundbite shots than stories featuring men reporters but stories featuring a gender-relevant verbal frame did have more negative soundbite shots than stories with a gender-neutral frame. When the non-soundbite video shots were analyzed, neither stories featuring a gender-relevant verbal frame nor stories referring to the importance of the women's vote had more negative shots than positive shots. In fact, the number of negative shots was a distant third behind the number of both positive and neutral shots. And, finally, stories featuring a gender-relevant frame did have more shots in which the audio and video did not match than stories with a gender-neutral frame but the overall number was small enough to make the results questionable.

Conclusions

As noted earlier, in the population of 1996 Presidential Election packages aired on the evening newscasts of ABC, CBS, and NBC, men were still the dominant force in television news. Male journalists made up two-thirds of the total reporter pool and were featured in 75% of the total packages. They also anchored over 90% of the newscasts under study and were much more likely to have their packages as the lead story in the newscast or within the show's first segment than female reporters. Male sources were also featured in 77% of all soundbites. These findings are consistent with percentages noted in numerous annual studies commissioned by the Women, Men and Media project, including 1996 (Hernandez, 1995; TV network news, 1997; Women, Men & Media, 1997; Women, Men & Media; 1998). However, when women television journalists were featured in packages, they made a dramatic difference in the overall coverage of the 1996 U.S. Presidential Election.

For example, women on television were more likely to report on women's issues, stories with topics typically identified as relevant to women and children, than men. Likewise, women on television were more likely to use gender-relevant verbal frames and refer to the importance of the women's vote than men. Additionally, in television news, gender is overt, obvious, and unavoidable because of the visual component of the medium. And, as noted by Hallin (1992), Steele and Barnhurst (1996), and Zhou (1999), since television news has become more journalist-centered, women reporters are more likely to appear on camera for longer periods of time than in the past and function as the primary communicators in their stories.

In newspapers, the gender of the reporter is only determined by names, which may or may not be obvious, or by the use of pronouns. Print writing, it seems, is much more conducive to gender-neutral reporting because the framing is based exclusively on the word choices of the journalist. However, because of the gender-relevance of most voices on radio and the gender-relevance of reporters shown in video, radio and television are not conducive to gender-neutral reporting. There is no way to escape being male or female if you work in television news, so women television reporters become almost representational of the women and issues they are covering. Additionally, women reporters may also serve as positive role models which, according to liberal feminist theory, can be empowering to women. Eaton (1997) noted that "the creation of alternative female role models within existing democratic political structures" (p. 860) can help change the power imbalance between men and women in terms of political involvement.

The prominence of gender-relevant verbal framing allowed women journalists on television the opportunity to highlight areas of interest in the election that might otherwise have been left out. One example occurred in a package on August 26, 1996, on the CBS Evening News when reporter Linda Douglass previewed incumbent Bill Clinton's and First Lady Hillary Clinton's messages to the Democratic National Convention. In a soundbite, President Clinton notes that it's been a good four years but Douglass reports it was tough for Mrs. Clinton "who's become the lightning rod for conservative wrath." Douglass continues by saying, "There had been talk that she would soften her image but, instead, the First Lady let it rip in a rousing feminist speech to women celebrating the right to vote."

This was followed by a Hillary Clinton soundbite, "If you shut your eyes and imagine the rights that men have, those are the rights women have as well. Every single right that is available to any man should be available to any woman, anywhere in the world, at any time." By choosing this specific gender-relevant frame for her story and this specific soundbite, Douglass brings women's rights and equality themes into a standard convention preview story. This is another example of how women television reporters can help to change the balance of political power between men and women. Jones and Jónasdóttir (1988) and Sapiro (1983) argued that, in the past, women have been less politically active because they lacked the skills and language necessary for a sense of political efficacy. However, as women's issues increasingly become political issues, women's involvement in the political process and political power should improve.

In this study, women reporters were also more likely to rely on references to the familial or marital status of the male candidates than men reporters. This was because the women normally covered stories involving the wives of Bill Clinton and Bob Dole. Women reporters were also more likely to include female sources in soundbites in their stories than men reporters, and women were more likely to include regular people as sources in soundbites than men reporters. In these instances, women journalists were able to let women speak more directly for themselves and the same went for sources who were not officials or experts. This should be seen as a positive because it represents a more inclusive type of news coverage for women. Unfortunately, in about two-thirds of the total packages, no female soundbites appeared, regardless of the gender of the reporter. This should be seen as a negative because, in presidential election news, women are still underrepresented as subjects and soundbite sources.

Other positive factors were noted in the news coverage analyzed in this study. Reporters were not likely to rely on references to the physical appearance of news sources or subjects and the quality of most soundbite shots was neutral. Additionally, most of the non-soundbite video in stories with a gender-relevant frame or in stories mentioning the importance of the women's vote was either neutral or positive which means there was less chance of visual bias caused by negative non-soundbite video. And although there was an indication that stories featuring a gender-relevant verbal frame had more negative soundbite shots than stories with a gender-neutral verbal frame, the correlation was weak.

A similar determination was made in the research question which asked if stories featuring a gender-relevant frame have more shots in which the audio and video do not match. Namely, that they do have slightly more shots in which the audio and video do not match but, since the total number was only 6 shots out of 157, the significance of the finding is minimal. However, it is a positive that so few network news packages featured discrepant audio and video messages. As noted by scholars such as Crigler, Just, and Neuman (1994) and Drew and Grimes (1987), television news messages are more effective when the audio and video are complementary.

Along a different line, Jennings (1988) offers a three part model to explain the evolution of "gender gap" studies in politics. Jennings says that prior to the 1960s, the convergence model was evident in most studies because sex explained little variance in voting preferences. "Women's lesser political involvement, as conventionally defined, was the most significant exception to this pattern" (p.10-11). By the 1960s and 1970s, a divergence model took over during the time of the women's movement and increased involvement in the issue of the Equal Rights Amendment debate. As Jennings points out, "Divergence is inherent in the term gender gap" (p. 11). Jennings' call is for a normative model of gender divergence, saying research should continue to highlight the convergence of the sexes, but at the same time reveal pressures and tendencies at work toward divergence.

This normative model seems particularly appropriate for gender studies of journalists and news coverage because there are a number of factors that work toward convergence. These include newsroom socialization, the structure of news work, and the traditions of journalism which emphasize balance and objectivity. At the same time, gender-based research should attempt to reveal pressures and tendencies that work toward divergence involving journalists and to minimize the potential for misrepresentation of women in news coverage. If we think about the results of this study in terms of a normative model, we can see how certain journalistic factors highlight convergence, such as newsroom socialization, the structure of news work, and the traditions of journalism which emphasize balance and objectivity. This results in similarities in news stories created by men and women. For example, there were almost no instances of journalists referring unnecessarily to the physical appearance of women or men in stories, and the overall quality of the television news video was similar without being excessively negative.

However, this study also uncovered some pressures that work toward divergence, such as mixed messages about women's involvement in the political process and the smaller number of women journalists and women news sources. This normative model works well in conjunction with the study of gender factors in news stories because it allows for appreciation of similarity and difference. As noted by Jolliffe (1989, p. 691), "It is hoped that consciousness of gender differentiation of women--and attempts to avoid it--may lead to correction of gender differentiation for men and women."

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Appendix D

Coding Scheme for Television Network News Study

Section One

1. Item Number 3 cols (1-3)
2. Month of story 2 col (4,5)
    - 08=August
    - 09=September
    - 10=October
3. Day of story 2 cols (6,7)
4. Network 1 col (8)
    - 1=ABC
    - 3=CBS
    - 5=NBC
5. Is the newscast anchor introducing the reporter a 1 col (9)
    - 1=Woman
    - 3=Man
6. Location of story within newscast 1 col (10)
    - 1= Lead
    - 3= First segment after lead
    - 5= Second segment after commercial
    - 7= Third segment or later

7. Length of story 1 col (11)
    - 1= Under 1 minute
    - 3= 1:00 - 2:00
    - 5= 2:01 - 3:00
    - 7= 3:01 - 4:00
    - 9= 4:01 or longer

8. Is the reporter a 1 col (12)
    - 1=Woman
    - 3=Man

9. What political party is mentioned 1 col (13)
    - 1= Democratic
    - 3= Republican
    - 5=Both Democratic and Republican
    - 7= Other, including multiple party mentions
    - 9= None

Section Two

10. Main topic 2 cols (14,15)
    01= Health, health care
    02= Environment
    03= Education
    04= Religion, school prayer
    05= Economic growth, budget deficit, taxes, corporate downsizing, business
    06= Welfare, Social Security
    07= Race, gender, affirmative action, age
    08= Abortion
    09= Illegal drug use, smoking, alcohol abuse
    10= Gay and Lesbian Rights
    11= Crime, gun control, domestic violence, terrorism
    12= Defense, military, foreign policy
    13= Trade, labor, agriculture
    14= Immigration
    15= Candidate qualifications, poll standings, political strategies, campaign tactics, campaign finance
    16= Voters' views or opinions
    17=Other

11. First Subsidiary Topic 2 cols (16,17)
    (Use categories from #10 above)
    99=None

12. Does any part of the story include a reference to a women's issue? 1 col (18)
    (A women's issue is defined as an issue that primarily affects females in society, such as reproductive health, family planning, abortion, childcare, sexual harassment, rape, sexual discrimination, domestic violence, feminism)

    1=Yes
    3=No

13. Is any verbal frame gender-neutral or gender-relevant? 1 col (19)
    (**Gender-neutral** is defined as labeling, categorizing, or describing people or issues with no reference to being male/female. **Gender-relevant** is defined as labeling, categorizing, or describing people or issues with a specific reference to being male/female. This would include references which are gender specific by definition, such as wife, mother, daughter, matronly, etc. for women or husband, father, son, patronly etc. for men)

[Examples:

#3 Gender-relevant frames, but the story **only** includes a reference to a person's spouse as "his wife" or "her husband":

Reporter states in a sentence about Jack Kemp, "and backed by the even firmer position of his wife, Joanne"

Reporter states in a sentence about Bill Clinton, "along with his wife, Hillary"

#5 Gender-relevant frames in any other context:

Reporter quotes Colin Powell directly, "I believe in a woman's right to choose and I strongly support affirmative action," he said.

Reporter states, "Haley Barbour, the party chairman, made no secret of the Republicans' effort tonight to appeal to women, who in recent elections have favored the Democrats by a larger margin than men."

1= Gender-neutral
3= Gender-relevant, but the entire story includes ONLY a reference to a person's spouse as "his wife" or "her husband."
5=Gender-relevant in any other context

14. Does the story contain a direct reference to the value or importance of the **women's vote** in the 1996 Election?

1=Yes 1 col (20)
3=No

15. Does the reporter make a reference to the physical appearance or attire of a **female** source or subject referenced in the story? 1 col (21)

1=Yes
3=No

16. Does the reporter make a reference to the physical appearance or attire of a **male** source or subject referenced in the story? 1 col (22)
1=Yes, about either candidate, Clinton or Dole
3=Yes, about a male source or subject other than Clinton or Dole
5=Yes, about both a candidate AND a male source or subject other than Clinton & Dole
7=No

17. Does the reporter make a reference to Bill Clinton's **familial or marital status**? (Familial or marital status includes references to his being married, being a husband, father, son, etc.)
1=Yes 1 col (23)
3=No

18. Does the reporter make a reference to Bob Dole's **familial or marital status**?

(Familial or marital status includes references to his being married, being a husband, father, son, etc.)

1=Yes 1 col (24)
3=No

19. Number of soundbites in the story 2 cols (25, 26)

(Do not include a reporter acting as the source of information, and include only sources identified by name, either on screen or verbally)

20. Number of female soundbites in the story 2 cols (27,28)

21. Enter the **number** of sources identified verbally or visually as

1=a candidate, public officeholder, government official, or a spokesperson for a candidate 1 col (29)
2=a political party representative not listed in #1 above, including political convention delegates 1 col (30)
3=an expert, political analyst, or other news media personnel 1 col (31)
4=affiliated with an interest group, a lobbyist, or a business, corporate, or industry spokesperson 1 col (32)
5=regular or typical citizen 1 col (33)

Section Three

22. Enter the number of **TYPES** of candidate soundbites featuring Bill **Clinton**:

1 = Campaign bites from stump speeches or occasions when the candidate is speaking directly to the voters 1 col (34)
3= Commercial bites in which video is taken from a commercial 1 col (35)
5= News bites in which statements are made specifically to the news media 1 col (36)
7= Debate bites 1 col (37)
9= Other 1 col (38)

23. Evaluate the **video quality** of the soundbites featuring Bill **Clinton**:

1= Enter the number of neutral soundbite shots. Neutral is defined as a medium shot, camera at eye level, subject(s) expression is positive or focused intently.	1 col (39)
3= Enter the number of positive soundbite shots. Positive is defined as close-up or medium shot, camera tilted up (a low angle shot) and subject(s) appears confident, enthusiastic, relaxed, and maybe smiling.	1 col (40)
5= Enter the number of negative soundbite shots. Negative is defined as a long shot or side-view shot, camera tilting downward (a high angle shot), and subject appears angry, tense, tired, tentative.	1 col (41)

24. Enter the number of **TYPES** of candidate soundbites featuring Bob **Dole**:

1 = Campaign bites from stump speeches or occasions when the candidate is speaking directly to the voters	1 col (42)
3= Commercial bites in which video is taken from a commercial	1 col (43)
5= News bites in which statements are made specifically to the news media	1 col (44)
7= Debate bites	1 col (45)
9= Other	1 col (46)

25. Evaluate the **video quality** of the soundbites featuring Bob **Dole**:

1= Enter the number of neutral soundbite shots. Neutral is defined as a medium shot, camera at eye level, subject(s) expression is positive or focused intently.	1 col (47)
3= Enter the number of positive soundbite shots. Positive is defined as close-up or medium shot, camera tilted up (a low angle shot) and subject(s) appears confident, enthusiastic, relaxed, and maybe smiling.	1 col (48)
5= Enter the number of negative soundbite shots. Negative is defined as a long shot or side-view shot, camera tilting downward (a high angle shot), and subject appears angry, tense, tired, tentative.	1 col (49)

26. Evaluate the **video quality** of the non-candidate soundbites featuring **women as primary speakers**:

1= Enter the number of neutral soundbite shots. Neutral is defined as a 1 col (50)
medium shot, camera at eye level, subject(s) expression is positive
or focused intently.
3= Enter the number of positive soundbite shots. Positive is defined as 1 col (51)
close-up or medium shot, camera tilted up (a low angle shot) and
subject(s) appears confident, enthusiastic, relaxed, and maybe smiling.
5= Enter the number of negative soundbite shots. Negative is defined as a 1 col (52)
long shot or side-view shot, camera tilting downward (a high angle
shot), and subject appears angry, tense, tired, tentative.

27. Evaluate the **video quality** of the non-candidate soundbites featuring **men as primary speakers**:

1= Enter the number of neutral soundbite shots. Neutral is defined as a 1 col (53)
medium shot, camera at eye level, subject(s) expression is positive
or focused intently.
3= Enter the number of positive soundbite shots. Positive is defined as 1 col (54)
close-up or medium shot, camera tilted up (a low angle shot) and
subject(s) appears confident, enthusiastic, relaxed, and maybe smiling.
5= Enter the number of negative soundbite shots. Negative is defined as a 1 col (55)
long shot or side-view shot, camera tilting downward (a high angle
shot), and subject appears angry, tense, tired, tentative.

28. If a **gender-relevant verbal frame** is noted anywhere in the story, evaluate the quality of the video:
99= Not a gender-relevant frame. 2 cols (56,57)
1= Enter the number of neutral non-soundbite shots. 2 col (58, 59)
Neutral is defined as a medium shot, camera shooting level, with subject(s) appearing without a positive or negative expression or, if no people are in the shot, if the content has no remarkable quality.
2= Enter the number of positive non-soundbite shots. 2 col (60, 61)
Positive is defined as a close-up or medium shot, camera tilted up (a low angle shot), with the subject(s) appearing confident, enthusiastic, relaxed, and maybe smiling or, if no people are in the shot, if the content has a significant positive quality.
3= Enter the number of negative non-soundbite shots. 2 col (62, 63)
Negative is defined as a long shot or side-view shot, camera tilting downward (a high angle shot), with the subject(2) appearing angry, tense, tired, tentative or, if no people are in the shot, if the content has a substantial negative quality.

29. If the **importance of the women's vote** is noted anywhere in the story, evaluate the quality of the video:

99= Importance of the women's vote NOT noted. 2 col (64, 65)

1= Enter the number of neutral non-soundbite shots. 2 col (66, 67)
Neutral is defined as a medium shot, camera shooting level, with subject(s) appearing without a positive or negative expression or, if no people are in the shot, if the content has no remarkable quality.
2= Enter the number of positive non-soundbite shots. 2 col (68, 69)
Positive is defined as a close-up or medium shot, camera tilted up (a low angle shot), with the subject(s) appearing confident, enthusiastic, relaxed, and maybe smiling or, if no people are in the shot, if the content has a significant positive quality.
3= Enter the number of negative non-soundbite shots. 2 col (70, 71)
Negative is defined as a long shot or side-view shot, camera tilting downward (a high angle shot), with the subject(2) appearing angry, tense, tired, tentative or, if no people are in the shot, if the content has a substantial negative quality.

31. Enter the number of shots in which the audio & video do not match. 2 cols (72, 73)

Civil Liberties and Mobilization Information in Press Coverage of the USA PATRIOT Act

For Presentation at the AEJMC 2003 Convention
Newspaper Division

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Abstract

This paper examines information allowing political participation in newspaper coverage of the USA PATRIOT Act and proposes a new method for content analysis that measures salience by considering every story that refers to the Act and the number of references per story. It expands the idea of mobilization information to issue awareness during the legislative process and finds that civil liberties concerns represent a complex issue for the press.

Introduction

The USA PATRIOT Act of 2001, passed in response to the events of September 11, was the first post-9/11 challenge for the press to balance the issues of rising government power with civil rights concerns as well as privacy and safety. Containing three hundred and fifty subject areas, effecting forty federal agencies and twenty-one legal amendments, and passed in just six weeks, the USA PATRIOT Act represents a formidable test for balanced press coverage of the sweeping regulation (Mendoza, 2001).

For the press to fulfill its role as an information provider in a functional democracy, news stories about proposed legislation must be substantive, timely, and descriptive (including identification information and relevant aspects of the issue). Newspaper coverage of this legislation represents press patterns for policy coverage in the post-9/11 news media environment and sets a precedent for government and media interaction during the "War on Terror." This pilot study provides a baseline for the substance of newspaper coverage of the USA PATRIOT Act and investigates the following aspects of the coverage:

1. For major newspaper coverage, what is the relationship between the number of stories only mentioning the Act and the number of stories about the Act?
2. For major newspaper coverage, what are the characteristics of stories mentioning civil liberties?
3. For major newspaper coverage, how much of the coverage of the Act mentions the name of the legislation?
4. For major newspaper coverage, what is the nature of stories published before the Act passed and stories published after the Act passed?

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Literature Review

Just six days after the September 11 terrorist attacks, Attorney General John Ashcroft presented congressional leaders with the Bush Administration's proposal to strengthen anti-terrorism legislation. The proposal, called the Mobilization Against Terrorism Act, was designed to punish terrorists, prevent terrorism, and destroy terrorist organizations. The Mobilization Again Terrorism Act dealt with many areas including immigration, intelligence gathering, money laundering, and criminal justice. The administration was mainly looking to broaden the abilities of the intelligence community to conduct roving searches of people suspected of terrorist involvement, to detain people suspected of terrorist involvement, and remove statues of limitations on crimes of terrorism. They also wanted expanded powers for the Department of Justice to place wiretaps on phones and computer terminals of suspected terrorists or anyone having connection to suspected terrorists (Evans, 2002).

The Mobilization Against Terrorism Act was the foundation for the Provide Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (PATRIOT) Act of 2001 introduced by the House of Representatives and the Uniting and Strengthening America (USA) Act of 2001 introduced by the Senate, which became the USA PATRIOT Act of 2001 (Evans, 2002).

On October 2, 2001, the PATRIOT Act was introduced in the House of Representatives. The Uniting and Strengthening America (USA) Act of 2001 was introduced in the Senate two days later. The Senate approved its version of the bill with a vote of ninety-six to one and the next day the House approved its version of the bill with a vote of three hundred thirty-seven to seventy-nine (Evans, 2002).

The House and Senate bills went even further than the Bush Administration's proposal by creating a provision allowing secret searches of a suspect's property. A letter written by the ACLU and backed by 180 other national organizations warned congress not to pass the bill too quickly saying, an act "passed immediately makes it almost impossible for the majority of the Congress to understand the implications of pending bills" (Murphy & Nojeim, 2001, p.1). However, the Senate debated the final version of the bill for only one day. The Senate passed its version of the bill on October 11 and the House passed its version on October 12. On October 25, 2001, Congress passed the USA PATRIOT Act and President Bush signed it into law the next day (Evans, 2002).

Evans (2002) believes that the Act goes too far and criticizes the expansion of the role of the director of the CIA in domestic intelligence gathering, the broadening of surveillance powers for the intelligence community, and the limitations for judicial oversight of the surveillance, and the ability of judges to issue a search warrant without the persons name or location on it. She states, "Ultimately, the USA PATRIOT Act sets aside the all too important protections guaranteed by the Fourth Amendment in the name of fighting terrorism" (Evans, 2002).

Germain (2002) also criticized the new ability the USA PATRIOT Act gives to the Attorney General to "certify" non-citizens as suspected terrorists. This means non-citizens could be detained indefinitely with only reasonable grounds to believe they would engage in terrorist activity (Germain, 2002).

Coen (2001) refers to the USA PATRIOT Act as a serious erosion of American civil liberties. Her review of ABC, NBC, and CBS's coverage of the Patriot Act showed that the media nearly ignored this issue. Though there was little coverage of the Act, when it was covered there was always some suggestion that these new measures were necessary. Neither

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CBS Evening News nor NBC Nightly News covered the first round of debate about the legislation at all (Coen, 2001).

Lewis (2002) mentions the USA PATRIOT Act as one of many new government actions that limit civil liberties. Lewis (2002) states, "We are talking about a tectonic shift from past decades in how our Freedom of Information laws and commonly held principles of openness and government accountability are administered and adhered to by those in power" (p.84). She also noted that broader powers to monitor e-mail and telephone communication given by the USA PATRIOT Act could potentially be used not only against terrorists but also against journalists (Lewis, 2002).

The press has been widely criticized for the patriotic nature of its reporting after September 11. Criticism stems from poor and scarce reporting on the war on terror, a lack of criticism of President Bush's policies, and a lack of coverage of the USA PATRIOT Act. Results from a Gallup poll in November of 2001 showed that 57% of Americans disapproved of the way the news media was handling the war on terrorism (Masci, 2001). However, that disapproval has also come from a perception that the press has not been patriotic enough. Jack Kelley of *USA Today* was strongly criticized for reporting that U.S. troops had been operating secretly in Afghanistan for two weeks, until it was later confirmed by U.S. officials to be true (Kalb, 2001). Columnists Tom Gutting, of the *Texas City* (Texas) *Sun*, and Dan Guthrie, of the *Daily Courier* in Grants Pass, Oregon, were both fired in September 2001 for criticizing the president (Kalb, 2001).

Press operations in this environment –especially about a policy issue such as the USA PATRIOT Act– are controversial. Lemert (1981) has shown that for controversial issues, the information that allows the politically inexperienced to act on their existing attitudes is withheld precisely when these citizens need it to effect the policy discourse. Lemert found that journalists and editors exclude this type of information because they believe it creates an appearance of bias, particularly for controversial issues. Lemert called this type of information mobilization information (MI). Mobilization information appears more frequently in positive news stories, such as stories describing charity events, where the journalists assume a homogenous, positive attitude from the audience. In this 'safe' context mobilization information is included because it is considered harmless. Political MI may include the names of key people for a policy issue, organizations with a particular point of view and their contact information, meeting times and places, and the identity and contact information of decision makers on a given issue (Lemert, 1981). The media's selection of issues for attention and the frames for thinking about those issues bestow a great agenda setting function upon the media (McCombs & Shaw, 1993) and MI, like any aspect of a newsworthy issue, is also subject to agenda setting. Lemert (1981, p.214) wrote, "Obviously, the news media can and do change information about citizen attitudes merely through their decisions to cover (or not cover) this information."

By broadening Lemert's model of mobilization information it is possible to examine how much the press not only mobilized the public either to support or oppose the USA PATRIOT Act, but also how aware the public was made of the issue. Lemert identified three types of mobilization information. Locational MI provides information about an issue in advance, such as the time and place of a meeting; identificational MI provides enough name and location information for persons to recognize the entity outside of the media coverage; and tactical MI provides explicit and implicit information on how to behave and what strategies are successful (Lemert, 1981).

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Expanding Lemert's (1981) model to refer not just to the listing of times and dates but more broadly as the degree to which the public was made aware of the policy and therefore would have the ability to support or oppose the legislation, the following manifestations of mobilization information are possible. Stories about the USA PATRIOT Act before the Act was passed alert citizens that there is an issue to be decided soon and represent locational MI. Stories that refer to the USA PATRIOT Act and mention its actual name provide identificational MI. The mentioning of civil liberties concerns alert citizens that there may be cause for legitimate objection to the legislation and represent tactical MI.

While mobilization information is a reportable aspect of an issue that can explain the type of awareness and political participation for the politically inexperienced within news stories, framing examines the selection and salience of specific aspects represented or unrepresented in news stories. The number of news stories on a particular issue and the way the stories frame the issue are strongly correlated with the public perception and salience of the issue (McCombs & Shaw, 1993). Entman (1993, p.53) suggests that not just the total number of stories about an issue provide salience to the issue, "However, even a single unillustrated appearance of a notion in an obscure part of the text can be highly salient, if it comports with the existing schemata in a receiver's belief systems."

Traditionally, many content analyses identify stories using a headline or headline first paragraph search. While this is certainly useful in finding the majority of stories specifically about a given issue, to truly measure salience, particularly for policy issues cutting across many subject areas such as the USA PATRIOT Act, the total number of references to the issue in each story provides a richer description of the press representation of the issue. The press provides salience to an issue and recognizes its news value not only by the number of headline stories or the number of full paragraphs describing the issue but also by acknowledging the presence of the issue across stories.

Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock (1991) have shown that an issue framed to accentuate civil liberties concerns can increase the public's support for privacy and tolerance considerations and the same issue framed to accentuate the need for public safety can increase support for safety measures at the expense of privacy and tolerance. Similarly, Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley (1997) have shown that stories framed to accentuate civil liberties concerns increase the audience's self-reported tolerance of controversial groups and the same stories framed to accentuate pubic order decreased self-reported tolerance of the same groups. Thus, as civil liberties can create a powerful frame, it is important to determine the characteristics of stories mentioning civil liberties concerns with respect to the number of references per story. Because there was not enough evidence to predict the outcome, the following research question was explored.

RQ: For major newspaper coverage, what is the relationship between the number of references to the USA PATRIOT Act in a news story and whether the story mentions civil liberties concerns?

The lack of mobilization information for controversial issues shown by Lemert (1981) suggests that the press seems more likely to mention an issue more and at the same time provide fewer in-depth stories about issues that the public may be particularly sensitive about. The media is known to seek drama but avoids truly confronting government policy (Barton, 1990). In this manner, the press can be expected to recognize the news value of this controversial issue by mentioning it often, but can avoid offending its audience by being too critical (or not critical enough) by not covering it in detail. This leads to the first hypothesis:

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H1: The distribution of references to the USA PATRIOT Act will show a much greater frequency of stories that only mention the Act.

At a minimum, portions of the vocal public such as the American Civil Liberties Union, if not portions of the general public as well, were concerned about the USA PATRIOT Act's effect on civil liberties. Without knowledge of what the "anti-terrorism legislation" is actually called the public cannot respond to the proposed legislation. Lemert's (1981) model suggests that tactical and identificational mobilization information such as the name of the Act and civil liberties concerns would be withheld until after the Act was passed. Additionally, the press had only six weeks to cover the legislative process, while covering the historic aftermath of the terrorist attacks, which could lead to more reflective coverage.

H2: Stories will be more likely to mention civil liberties concerns and the actual name of the USA PATRIOT Act after the Act was passed than before it was passed.

Methods

A study by Kiousis (2001) on media credibility found that people comparing online news, television news, and newspapers still rate newspapers with the highest credibility of all three media channels. At the same time, newspaper circulation polls show that circulations increased in 2001 for the nation's largest newspapers even before September 11 ("Newspaper Circulation," 2001) and the circulation of all types of newspapers increased strongly after the attacks ("Newspaper circulation is up following attacks," 2001).

A survey by Beta Research and McPheters & Co. found that people reported spending 51% more time with newspapers in October 2001, and until April, they still reported spending

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33% more time with newspapers. In addition, the average number of papers people reported reading increased from 1.5 to 1.7. The researchers suggested that this increase benefited primarily large national papers because of their stronger coverage of foreign news (Fine, 2002). Therefore, even though, in general, the majority of Americans get their news from television, for people seeking credible information about the USA PATRIOT Act from September to December 2001 newspapers are particularly relevant.

The newspapers under study were chosen because they represent the top five newspapers in daily circulation during the October-December 2001-time period (Rose, 2002). The terms "anti-terrorism legislation," "terrorism bill," and "USA PATRIOT Act" were all used as search phrases to collect the sample. Other searches were employed to ensure that all stories mentioning the Act were found; however, these three terms were found to encompass the other search terms' results. The sample was made up of 112 stories taken from *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Washington Post* between September 12 and the end of December 2001. These dates were chosen because after December 2001, references to the USA PATRIOT Act were less frequent and typically about changes or new cases involving the Act. Editorials and newspaper indexes were excluded from the sample.

The *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *New York Times* stories were found using full text searches of Lexis/Nexis Academic Universe, while the *Wall Street Journal* and *Los Angeles Times* were found by performing an all-basic search fields search of Pro Quest. Stories were coded for mentioning civil liberties if the story mentioned, at least once, that there were civil liberties concerns, that civil liberties groups had taken some action, or that the constitutionality of the Act was in some way questioned. Stories coded as referring to the Act in the headline had to make a specific reference to the Act, not necessarily by calling it by name. For example,

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"Anti-terrorism Bill Stalls in Senate" and "Lawmakers Tone Down Terror Bill" were counted as referring to the Act in the headline. For measurement comparisons the stories were also coded as appearing or not appearing in headline searches under the same three search terms. Stories were coded as mentioning actual name of the act if they included any of the following terms: the "Mobilization Against Terrorism Act," "the PATRIOT Act," the "USA Act," " USA PATRIOT Act," or the "U.S.A. PATRIOT Act of 2001" as it was referred to by the Ashcroft proposal, the House, the Senate, the final legislation, and the final legislation with punctuation respectively. The earlier names of the USA PATRIOT Act were coded as actual references to the Act so that the comparison of references to the actual name of the Act before and after it passed would be accurate.

The number of references per story were counted including, but not limited to, references by the following terms: anti-terrorism legislation, terrorism bill, proposed legislation, terrorist statute, the bill, the act, or terrorism regulations unless these phrases were clearly describing legislation in a different country or previous anti-terrorism legislation. This changed the variable news stories from the usual nominal level of measurement (simply including or excluding stories based on the story including the issue in the first paragraph or headline) to a continuous level of measurement that can describe how closely a story is connected to the specific policy issue. For example, the following terms in bold were each coded as references to the USA PATRIOT Act (see appendix A for the complete example):

> Voting against the **anti-terrorism bill** wasn't even a close call for Sen. Russell Feingold (D-Wis.). It didn't matter that everyone else was voting for it, or that nine months ago he had voted to confirm the **bill**'s prime advocate, Attorney General John D. Ashcroft. What

> mattered most, he says, were the freedoms that were being taken away. (Pierre, 2001, p. A,8)

Only one reference to the act was counted per sentence. Stories appearing in newspapers before October 26, 2001 were coded as appearing before the Act passed.

Results

The research question sought to determine if a relationship existed between the number of references per story and stories mentioning civil liberties. A t-test found that, on average, the number of references to the Act ($\underline{M}$=7.83) in stories that mentioned civil liberties was significantly higher than in stories that did not mention civil liberties ($\underline{M}$=2.44), $\underline{t}(110)=5.65$, $p<.0001$.

The first hypothesis predicted that the distribution of references per story would show that a greater number of stories would have only a few references to the Act and fewer stories.

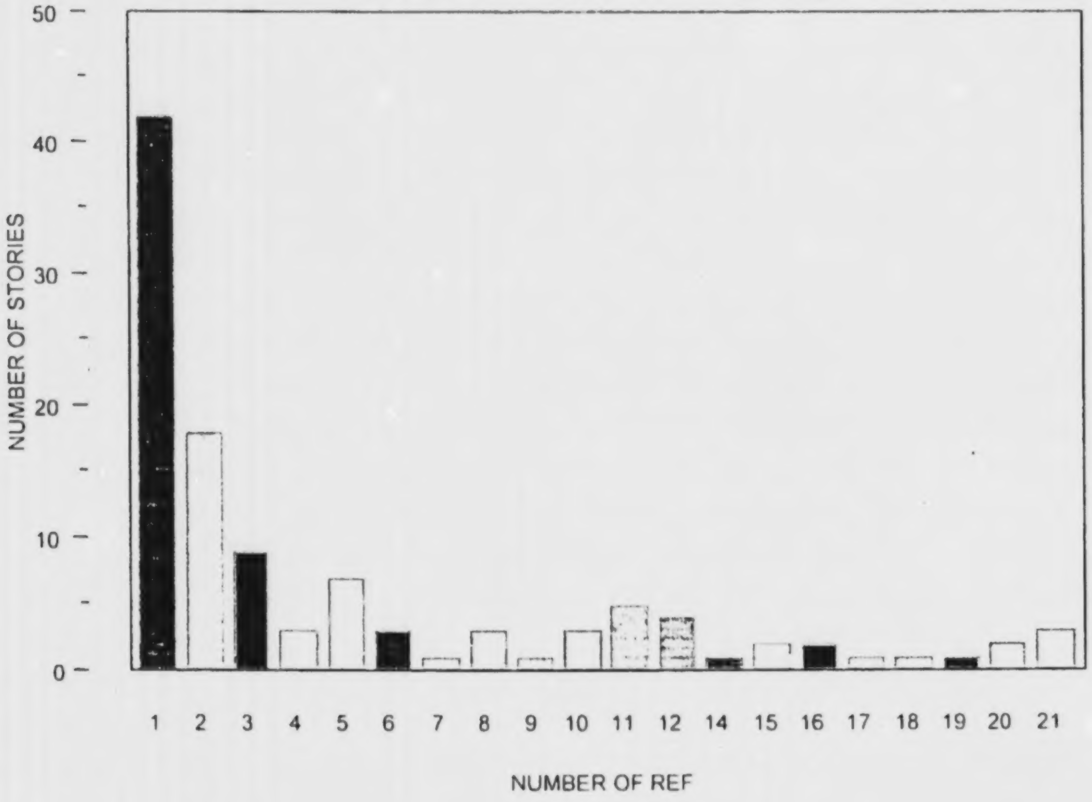

Figure 1: Frequency distribution of number of references, ($\underline{M}$= 5.14)

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would refer to it multiple times. The distribution of references to the USA PATRIOT Act was highly skewed toward a small number of references, with 37% of all stories containing only one reference to the Act (see figure 1). The mean number of references per story was 5.14. For stories coded as referring to the USA PATRIOT Act in the headline, the mean number of references was 11.5. Of the 112 stories included in the sample, 38 were coded as being referenced in the headline and 78 stories were not referenced in the headline. Although the Washington Post had by far the greatest number of stories mentioning the Act (see table 1), there were no statistically significant differences between the mentioning of civil liberties, the mentioning of the actual name of the USA PATRIOT Act, or the number of stories published before or after the Act passed between all newspapers.

Table 1: Number of stories per newspaper

Newspaper	Number of stories	Probability
Los Angeles Times	12	0.10714
New York Times	17	0.15179
USA Today	16	0.14286
Washington Post	59	0.52679
Wall Street Journal	8	0.07143
Total	112	1.00000

The second hypothesis predicted that more stories would mention the actual name of the Act and civil liberties concerns after the Act passed. A t-test showed a significantly greater number of references published before the Act passed (M= 6.95 references per story) than after the Act was legislated into law (M=3.05), t (110)= -3.8, p< .0002. A Chi Square test between references to the Act per story and month in which the story was published showed that the average number of references to the Act per story was significantly different by month. News

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coverage seemed to trail off, with the highest number of references in September (M=7.42), lower in October (M= 6.78), lower still in November (M=2.3), and lowest in December (M=2.06), $\chi 2$ (3)= 6.75, $p<.0003$.

Table 2: Stories Published Before the Act passed By Stories Mentioning the Actual name of the "USA PATRIOT Act"

Count Total % Col % Row %	Do not Mention USA PATRIOT Act	Mention USA PATRIOT Act	
After The Act Passed	36 32.14 39.13 69.23	16 14.29 80.00 30.77	52 46.43
Before The Act Passed	56 50.00 60.87 93.33	4 3.57 20.00 6.67	60 53.57
	92 82.14	20 17.86	112

$p< .0007$

Despite a greater number of references to the Act before it was passed, a Chi Square test run between stories published before the Act passed and stories mentioning the actual name of the Act showed that significantly more stories mentioned the actual name of the Act after the Act passed, $\chi 2$ (1)= 11.52, $p< .0007$ (see table 2).

Table 3: Stories Published Before the Act Passed By Stories Mentioning Civil Liberties concerns

Count Total % Col % Row %	Do Not Mention Civil Liberties	Mention Civil Liberties	
After the Act Passed	30 26.79 53.57 57.69	22 19.64 39.29 42.31	52 46.43
Before the Act Passed	26 23.21 46.43 43.33	34 30.36 60.71 56.67	60 53.57
	56 50.00	56 50.00	112

$P \geq .10$

Only 6.6% of stories before the Act passed mentioned the actual name of the USA PATRIOT Act, while 30% of stories after the Act passed mentioned its actual name. However, a Chi Square test between stories published before the Act passed and stories mentioning civil liberties concerns found that the difference in the number of stories mentioning civil liberties before the Act was passed was not significantly different from the number published after the Act was passed, $\chi 2$ (1)= 2.3, $p \geq .10$ (see table 3).

Discussion

The finding that civil liberties concerns were, on average, mentioned when a greater number of references to the Act were included in the story suggests that stories with one or relatively few references to a given policy issue (as the majority of stories are in this sample) exclude vital aspects of the policy issue resulting in incomplete coverage. The findings also indicate that specific aspects of newspaper coverage can be related to the number of references to a policy issue in a news story. More broadly, the number or references to a policy issue in a news story can indicate what aspects will be included in the coverage and estimate (in terms of including specific aspects) how complete the coverage is.

The greater number of references, on average, in stories mentioning civil liberties concerns also shows that the concept of civil liberties is an involved issue. Because Sniderman, Brody, and Tetlock (1991) and Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley (1997) have shown that civil liberties concerns can create a powerful frame, more clarification may be needed to counter the frame (assuming that it is usually countered) in the balanced journalistic tradition. Although all stories mentioning civil liberties cannot be considered as employing a civil liberties frame, stories not even mentioning civil liberties are framing the policy debate in such a way that fundamental aspects of the issue are excluded from the frame. Additionally, the overall lack of mentioning civil liberties concerns in half of the total press coverage indicates that civil liberties concerns were not the dominant frame employed by the press in coverage of the USA PATRIOT Act.

The first hypothesis, that there would be a greater number of stories with few references to the Act, was fully supported. This suggests that the press recognized the news value of the USA PATRIOT Act by mentioning it across many stories but devoted little coverage specifically to the Act. In this manner, the press avoided controversial aspects of the story while still recognizing its news value. The distribution of references per story to the Act also supports the rationale for the reference counting method of content analysis because by employing traditional methods, 74 out of the 112 stories in the sample –which were coded as not referring to the Act in their headline– would have been excluded.

Stories with a small number of references to the USA PATRIOT Act that do not mention civil liberties concerns may, depending on the context, create an even more powerful frame in which the legislation is not questioned or explained. For example, many stories referring to the USA PATRIOT Act were actually about the anthrax attacks. Referring to "anti-terrorism legislation" (as it was often called) in this context primes a much different response from the audience toward the legislation than a story with a long and detailed description of the Act and its possible implications.

The second hypothesis, that stories will be more likely to mention civil liberties and the actual name of the USA PATRIOT Act after the Act passed than before it passed, was partially supported. The finding that significantly more stories mentioned the actual name of the Act after it was legislated into law was striking because there was both a higher total number of stories before (N=60) the Act passed than after (N=52) the Act passed and, on average, significantly more references to the Act per story in stories published before the Act passed. The omission of the name of the Act before it passed was nearly complete, with only four stories mentioning the actual name of the Act before it passed.

There were actually more stories mentioning civil liberties that were published before the Act passed than after, although it was not statistically significant. The data suggests that the press did do relatively better than expected in terms of the timeliness of mentioning civil liberties concerns during the legislative process. There could be more mentions of civil liberties concerns before Act passed due to the distribution of references, with almost twice as many references to the Act in stories before the Act passed.

Overall, the application of Lemert's model of mobilization information for controversial issues received mixed support. The significantly fewer stories mentioning the actual name of the

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Act before it passed shows a lack of identifiactional MI. This hindered the public's participation in the legislative process. However, the significantly higher number of references to the Act per story before the Act passed provides the public with more locational MI. Therefore, the public is made more aware of the proposed legislation while there is still time to express support or opposition.

The statistically insignificant difference between the number of stories mentioning civil liberties concerns before the Act passed compared to after the Act passed to some extent suggests that tactical MI was not withheld during the legislation process. Thus, the public was not completely denied timely information that there may be cause for concern about the legislation. However, over all only half of all stories even mentioned civil liberties concerns. In this aspect the press failed to alert citizens that there may be cause for legitimate objection to the legislation and withheld tactical MI.

Generally, the press coverage did promote awareness of the legislation and mentioned civil liberties concerns more before the Act was passed than after. However, other aspects of the issue important to political participation were lacking, including the actual name of the Act and to a certain extent, civil liberties concerns.

Limitations

Intuitively, the sample of 112 stories with references to the USA PATRIOT Act for five newspapers over a nearly four-month period seems to suggest inadequate press coverage of this legislation. Unfortunately, no solid conclusions about the total number of stories can be made, because the unprecedented media environment following September 11 and the uniqueness of the USA PATRIOT Act would make any other policy issue's validity questionable as a comparative study.

Because this specific method of counting the number of references to a policy issue in news stories has not been previously employed, it is unknown if the distribution of references is a normal press pattern for policy issues or if it is unique to controversial policy issues or legislation with a high number of subject areas. Using only one researcher to code all the stories was another limitation. Two different databases were used to construct the sample, which could have created some differences in the way stories were found from each newspaper, although the difference in the number of stories between newspapers seemed consistent with the coverage expectation for each newspaper. The researcher did perceive differences in the number and type of editorials that the different databases found. For this reason editorials could not be included in the study.

Future Research

Research on newspaper coverage specifically on the coverage of the USA PATRIOT Act would benefit from a contextual analysis that could compare the tone of the newspaper coverage with the amount of coverage and explore the topics and framing of the Act in stories not specifically about the Act. Research on newspaper coverage of policy issues employing the reference counting method could compare the frequency and distribution of references for other controversial or non-controversial issues to this sample's distribution. Other variables common to news stories, such as whether stories mentioned pubic opinion, could be examined for a relationship with the number of references per story. Relationships found between other common news story variables or frames to the number of references per story could be compared

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to judge the relative complexity of the news story's element or frame. Further research could determine the number of stories and references per story needed for both issue awareness and political participation for stories about legislation.

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Appendix A

Words in bold indicate terms counted as references to the Act:

> Voting against the **anti-terrorism bill** wasn't even a close call for Sen. Russell Feingold (D-Wis.). It didn't matter that everyone else was voting for it, or that nine months ago he had voted to confirm the **bill**'s prime advocate, Attorney General John D. Ashcroft. What mattered most, he says, were the freedoms that were being taken away.
>
> So he cast the lone dissenting vote Thursday in the Senate. Passed 357 to 66 in the House, the **bill** was signed into law yesterday by President Bush.
>
> In an interview yesterday, Feingold said that despite the lopsided margins, many of his fellow legislators voted for the measure only because they felt they had no choice. He said that even the bill's title—the **"USA Patriot Act"**—was part of the "relentless" pressure to move it swiftly.
>
> "This is one of the ridiculous things they do in Washington," he said. "They want to intimidate people. . . . A number of my colleagues said they thought I was right on the merits but felt they had to vote for **it** anyway."
>
> The vote was nothing unusual for Feingold, said Jeff Mayers, editor of WisPolitics.com. Mayers said Feingold made a name for himself by protesting bovine growth hormones—popular with farmers in this dairy-producing state because they increase milk production—and as a state senator often went against the wishes of Democratic Party leaders.
>
> "This is what people have come to expect out of Feingold," Mayers said. "He's the Wisconsin maverick. He seems to score points for taking the stand and telling people what he thinks."
>
> Feingold said what particularly troubled him on the **anti-terrorism bill** was the broader authority it gave in federal criminal investigations—not just those involving suspected terrorists—to secretly search homes and offices.
>
> It was no small matter, he said, that police can compel the disclosure of medical or education records of anyone with even a casual knowledge of a suspected terrorist. "This is not a **bill** that is carefully tailored to the terrorism problem. The whole tenor of the debate was 'Let's grab as much as we can' given the fear of terrorism."
>
> At 48, Feingold has been in politics for nearly two decades, winning a seat in the Wisconsin Senate on his first try at 29. He was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1992 and is in the middle of his second term. He is considered a progressive, sponsoring legislation to end racial profiling on the nation's roadways and to examine the role of racial discrimination in the application of capital punishment.
>
> Earlier this year, he was taken to task by supporters who viewed his vote to confirm Ashcroft as a betrayal of those roots. Feingold said he just votes his conscience.
>
> In this case, he said, there was no way in good conscience to support the **anti-terrorism bill**. He said he was also listening to his constituents, who understand that government should not be given too much power. Since the vote, he said, calls to his offices in Washington and Wisconsin have been evenly split between supporters and detractors.

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Feingold, chairman of the Judiciary subcommittee on the Constitution, has posted a 10-page statement on his Web site outlining the reasons for his vote. But he said he does not believe that patriotism requires everyone to walk in lockstep. "Unity doesn't mean unanimity," he said.

Now that the **bill** is passed, Feingold said Congress is going to have to keep watch on how its provisions are enforced. He's not hopeful they can be overturned.

"The problem is that these things tend to go only in one direction." (Pierre, 2001, p. A,8)

Radio-TV

The Effects of Preferred Radio Format on Listeners' Attention, Retention, and Loyalty

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ABSTRACT

Radio has become a constant presence in the everyday lives of most Americans. It has adopted throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first in order to keep up with advances in technology like television and the Internet. Still, little is known about the attention and cognition factors related to the medium. The little research that exists relies on self reported attention, leaving unanswered the question of what aspect of radio the respondents are paying attention to. In this study, recall measures of attention were added to the traditional self report measure in order to find out the relationship between station format preference and attention paid to radio. Also studied was the relationship between station format preference and station loyalty, and the question of whether where one listens affects the attention given to the radio. The results leaned toward more attention being given to talk radio, but the results did not prove significant. Station loyalty was significantly higher for talk radio, and no significant findings resulted in testing listening location and attention. What the study did show, however, is that self report and recall attention scores do not measure the same concept. This has theoretical implications for attention scholars and practical implications for radio advertisers and the industry.

INTRODUCTION

Most people have greater contact with radio throughout their day than any other medium (Thalhimer, 2000). Radio is still an attractive medium for advertisers and is perhaps increasingly attractive due to the fragmentation of the television audience, but "rising levels of advertising competition have made it increasingly difficult to attract and hold consumers attention" (Pieters, Warlop & Wedel, 2002). The formats that attract the most attention from listeners would also be very appealing to advertisers. The problem then is measuring the attention given to specific stations and formats. Despite the long history and popularity of radio, relatively little academic research exists on radio audience's attention and loyalty.

In this study the researchers attempted to understand characteristics of radio listeners. Specifically, the research questions were as follows:

1. For college students, what is the relationship between station format preference and attention given to the radio?
2. For college students, what is the relationship between station format preference and station loyalty?
3. For college students, controlling for format preference, what is the relationship between listening location and attention given to radio?

From these areas of interest, the researchers developed two hypotheses and a research question.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on radio's audience is usually limited to ratings which simply measure the presence or absence of the listener, the time in which they listen, and their demographics. In the past few decades, though, researchers have realized that the effects of media use differ among those paying high and low attention to that medium (e.g., Chaffee & Schleuder, 1986; Drew & Weaver, 1990). Chaffee and Schleuder (1986) explained that adding questions designed to measure attention to surveys "clarifies the behavior that is of interest in assessment of media effects" (p. 104). According to McLeod and Becker (1981), the uses and gratifications approach assumes that the audience is active.

The elimination of humans as passive observers led to the importance of measuring attention in media use studies. Annie Lang's (2000) limited capacity theory states that attention is under the dual control of the viewer/listener and the characteristics of the message. Thus, the subject can pay a certain amount of attention, and the message demands a certain level of attention. Because different radio formats contain different message characteristics, particularly news/talk formats and music formats, different formats may demand different levels of attention.

Talk radio has been shown to have the power to influence and reinforce listeners' political opinions (Andreasen, 1982; Lee & Cappella, 2001; Barker, 1998). In fact, Lee and Cappella (2001) found that the connection between radio listenership and political attitude formation is so strong that it can actually be measured in the reverse. That is, political knowledge can act as an indicator of how much one listens to certain kinds of radio.

Many studies have linked exposure to talk radio and increased political knowledge (Bennett, 2002). In Stamm, Johnson, and Martin's (1997) political knowledge survey they measured attention by using a scale with terms that ranked the level of attention given. The terms from lowest to highest were nonexposure, exposure, exposure and attention, and exposure, attention, and cognition. If the exposure to talk radio increased these participants' knowledge, it can be inferred that cognition, the highest form of attention, has occurred (Stamm, Johnson & Martin, 1997).

A survey conducted by The Radio and Television News Directors Foundation (RTNDF) in 2000, measured audience attention specifically to radio news. They found that one-half of news followers who listen to the radio reported that they pay close attention to radio news. However, this survey relied only on a self report measure of attention and was measuring all news on the radio, including news breaks on various music formats and not specifically the news/talk radio format. This leads to the study's first hypothesis.

H1: Respondents with favorite stations that have news/talk content will receive higher attention scores.

Motivation also plays a key role in attention. Increased motivation has been shown to increase attention (Andreasen, 1982). Lee and Cappella (2001) have shown that talk radio listeners pay close attention, often to the point of cognition. It is presumable that talk radio listeners are highly motivated listeners, and that they very much enjoy listening to talk radio, and would therefore want to listen to it often.

RTNDF (2000) found that 47% of news followers who listen to the radio report having a station they listen to particularly for news. Additionally, 25% of those news followers who listened to a particular station for news reported choosing the station specifically for its format (RTNDF, 2000).

Hofstetter and Gianos (1997) found in their study of radio use by adults in San Diego, California that the number of participants who ever listened to talk radio was only slightly higher than the number of participants who listen to talk radio regularly. Hence, those who are listening to talk radio are more likely to be loyal to, at least, the format. One goal of this study is to determine not only format loyalty, but station loyalty.

H2: Those reporting favorite stations with substantial news and/or talk content will report a higher percentage of time spent listening to those stations than respondents reporting stations with other formats as their favorite stations.

People inherently have a limited amount of attention bandwidth and processing capacity (Lang, 2000). In the case of driving while listening to the radio, Jancke, Musial, Vogt, & Kalveram (1994) found that people who have the radio on are less likely to drive within the boundaries of the road than are people who do not have the radio on (Jancke, Musial, Vogt, & Kalveram, 1994). Because these people are allotting some of their attention bandwidth to the radio, they are not concentrating fully on the task of driving their car.

Additionally, while listening to the radio and driving, there are fewer potential extraneous stimuli than when one is listening to the radio at work or in the home. Extraneous stimuli tap into the listeners' limited attention capacity, allowing the listener less of an attention allotment for the radio. In-car radio listeners are a captive audience that can presumably dedicate more attention bandwidth to the radio. This study sought to determine if people tend to pay more attention to the radio in the car than in the home or workplace, but there was not enough research in this area to develop a hypothesis. Hence, the original research question slightly modified to fit the sample and thus was investigated.

RQ: For Penn State students, controlling for format preference, what is the relationship between listening location and attention given to content?

METHODS

Participants

A list of 1,200 email addresses was randomly generated by the Penn State University Registrars office. The addresses were randomly selected from the pool of students who were registered at the university for the fall 2002 semester. The list email addresses were divided into four groups of 300 addresses each, with each researcher sending out their respective 300 emails. Emails were sent over an eighteen hour period during a weekend in mid-November (see Appendix A). Another email, reminding the potential respondents of the survey was sent the following Thursday (see Appendix B).

Of the 1,200 emails that were sent, 29 were returned as undeliverable. One hundred and seven completed surveys were submitted to the off-site email account, giving us a response rate of 9.14%. Two of the completed surveys were deemed unusable. For the purposes of this study, the population studied is made of Penn State University-University Park students who completed the online survey (N=105).

Survey

In developing the survey, several online pre-tests were conducted. Researchers constructed samples for the pre-test by asking various contacts in their personal email address books to participate. The group received a total of 36 pre-test responses over a two week period. Modifications to the survey based on feedback from the pre-tests were made during that time.

Once pre-testing had been completed, a final version of the survey was hosted on the university's server (see Appendix C). Attention, attitude and usage of media were measured in the online survey by asking a total of 19 questions relating to media recall and use. Several questions were used to acquire selected demographic information.

The survey contained a mixture of open and closed-ended questions. Only one question contained a magnitude scale which measured respondents' satisfaction level of local area radio stations. Respondents could only complete the survey once because of the specialized software program that was used to create the survey. Once a respondent completed the survey, the results were sent electronically to a separate, anonymous email account that was hosted off-site from the university. Results were kept confidential as the email account was password protected from the general public. Results were then coded and transferred to a software program where a database was created that allowed the researchers to process the data and examine results.

After permission from the university's Social Science and Biomedical Institutional Review Board was obtained (IRB# 00B1034), prospective respondents were sent an email notifying them that they had been randomly selected to participate in the survey. The email contained a hyperlink which would allow the respondent to access and complete the survey. The email also stated that participation in the survey acknowledged the respondent's consent for the researchers to use the results of the survey as they saw fit.

Attention Measures

Recall questions are commonly used to operationalize attention in survey research. Shapiro and Krishnan (2001) showed participants advertisements and then asked them to recall certain things about those ads. Stamm, Johnson, and Martin (1997) included a quiz about political issues in their survey in order to measure knowledge and attention. One advantage of using recall is its objectivity (Wells, 2000). One cannot prove recall of a message if he or she has not come in contact with that message.

A researcher can use self report measures of attention in both experiments and surveys, as well. These measures of attention can carry with them response bias and inaccurate assessments of one's own level of attention, but a self report can still be useful.

For this study, the researchers have decided to use both recall questions and self-report questions to operationalize attention. Drew and Weaver (1990) asked in a telephone survey how much attention people gave to a particular news story while reading the paper, seeing it on television news, or hearing it on radio news. They gave the respondents the choices of close attention, some attention, and little attention. The researchers believe "some attention" to be a poor choice, not mutually exclusive from "little attention." In order to correct this, the questionnaire used in this study put in its place a response of "moderate attention." The researchers also added a response of "no attention" in order to create a ratio scale and make coding match up with the recall measure of attention.

Coding

The questions regarding the respondents' favorite stations were used to determine the format of those stations in order to compare those formats with the percentage of time they devoted to those stations. The stations with substantial news or talk content were included in the news/talk format category. Stations that played mainly classic rock, alternative, or new rock were coded as rock formats. Hip hop, rap, top 40, pop, and stations playing things like, "the greatest hits of the 80's, 90's, and today," were coded as top 40/pop formats. Most other stations had easily distinguishable formats like country and oldies stations.

The respondents' accuracy (recall) on their favorite local radio stations' call letters, frequency, and slogans were given a score of 0 to 9, and then divided by the number of stations they reported. This number (the recall score of attention) was then compared to the respondents' favorite formats. The self report score of attention was from 0, if no attention was reported, to 3 if close attention was reported. The favorite formats of the respondents were coded as 0 (neither news/talk or sports was a favored format), 1 (news/talk or sports was favored), or 2 (news/talk and sports were favored.

Design

Results based on the hypotheses and the research question were analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests and an independent samples t-test. Ancillary and peripheral studies from the research were analyzed using ANOVA analysis and chi-square.

RESULTS

The sample was generally representative of the university that was studied. It included 11.53% minorities, and the population has 11.2% minorities (University Budget Office, 2002). The average age was 22.32 years, while the median and mode were 21. The only non-representative statistic was the lack of male respondents. Out of 105 respondents, 34.95% were males and 65.05% were females. Currently, men constitute 53.5% of the population while females represent the other 46.5% (University Budget Office, 2002). Of the 103 entering an answer to the question concerning the respondents' majors, 72 different responses were garnered. This made it virtually useless to use major for a control in any of the analyses.

Out of 98 respondents, 15.31% chose a news/talk station as their favorite (see Table 1). When choosing up to three of their favorite formats, 22.12% (N= 104) chose at least one with news/talk content. This gave the researchers enough of a news/talk audience to confidently analyze their data.

Table 1: Formats of Favorite Stations

Format of Favorite Station	Favorite (N= 98)	2nd Favorite (N= 84)	3rd Favorite (N= 54)
Big Band	0	0	1
Country	7	4	3
News/Talk	15	7	5
Oldies	1	1	1
Old Time Radio	0	1	0
Rock	42	42	26
Top 40/Pop	33	29	18

The first hypothesis predicted that those who choose stations with news/talk content will pay more attention to radio. The two measures of attention were measured by self reporting and a recall exercise. The self report responses were coded on a 0 to 3 scale, and resulted in a mean score of 1.62 (*SD*= .93, N= 105). The recall exercise also used a code from 0 to 3, and resulted in a mean of score 1.81 (*SD*= .66, N= 81). Because the scores were not significantly correlated, $r = .10$, $p = .38$, N = 81, the group tested both measures of attention with the formats of the respondents' favorite stations (see the discussion section for further elaboration on the difference between the two measures).

Using a one way ANOVA test, the researchers compared the format of the respondents' favorite radio stations and their self report attention score. Only stations with news/talk, rock, and top 40/pop formats were included due to the low number of stations with other formats. The data regarding the prediction that higher self reported attention is paid to news/talk formats leans toward supporting *H1*, but it is not significant, $F(2, 87)= 1.19$, $p< .40$ (see Table 2).

Table 2: Format of Favorite Station vs. Self Report Attention Score

Format of Favorite Station	Mean Self Report Attention Score
News/Talk	2.00
Rock	1.60
Top 40/Pop	1.73

N = 90
$F(2, 87)= 1.19$, $p< .40$

A one way ANOVA test was also run between those top three formats and the respondents' recall attention scores. Rock, not news/talk was proven to garner the most station information recall, and was significantly higher than the recall scores of top 40/pop listeners, $F(2, 72) = 5.56$, $p < .01$ (see Table 3). But, when an independent samples t-test was run between the recall scores of just news/talk and top 40/pop listeners, news/talk recall scores ($M = 1.93$, $SD = .13$) were also shown to be significantly higher than top 40/pop scores ($M = 1.47$, $SD = .09$), $t(36) = 3.00$, $p < .01$.

Table 3: Format of Favorite Station vs. Recall Attention Score

Format of Favorite Station	Recall Attention Score
News/Talk	1.93^{AB}
Rock	1.99^{A}
Top 40/Pop	1.47^{B}

N = 75

$F(2, 72) = 5.56$, $p < .01$

Note: Cell means that do not share a letter in their superscripts differ at $p < .01$ according to Tukey-Kramer HSD test.

The second hypothesis projected listeners with news/talk stations listed as their favorites would devote a higher percentage of time to those stations than any other format. A one way ANOVA test supports this hypothesis, $F(2, 73) = 5.96$, $p < .01$ (see Table 4). Those choosing news/talk formatted stations allocated 83.57% of their time spent listening to those news/talk stations. Rock listeners gave 53.71%, and top 40/pop listeners dedicated 48.50% to their favorite stations.

Table 4: Mean Percentage of Time Spent Listening to Favorite Radio Format

Format of Favorite Station	Mean % of Time Spent Listening to Favorite Format
News/Talk	83.57% ^{A}
Rock	53.71% ^{B}
Top 40/Pop	48.50% ^{B}

N = 76

$F(2, 73) = 5.96, p < .01$

Note: Cell means that do not share a letter in their superscripts differ at p< .01 according to Tukey-Kramer HSD test.

To test the research question, an ANOVA test was run between the location (car, home, or work) the respondent listened to the radio most and the self reported attention that was given to the radio while controlling for the listeners' favorite formats. When no significance was found, $F(4, 73) = 1.15, p < .40$, a one way ANOVA test was run between the location a person listened to the radio and the amount of attention they gave using self report and recall scores. Using the self report scores, no significance was found, $F(1,77) = 1.05, p < .40$, but, on average, those who listened to the radio mostly at home claimed they paid more attention to radio(see Table 5). Using the recall scores, those who listened at home scored better than those listening in the car (see Table 5), but there was still no significance, $F(1, 61) = .16, p < .70$. Due to a lack of those listening most at work, those respondents were not included in these analyses.

After finding out a slight movement toward home listeners paying more attention, the researchers decided to investigate where news/talk listeners used radios. Using a Chi Square test, news/talk listeners statistically showed that the majority of them listened to their radios at home, but it was not statistically significant, x^2 (2, 72) = 2.31, $p< .40$ (see Table 5).

Table 5: Percentage of Car and Home Listeners by Respondents' Favorite Format

Favorite Format	% that listened most in the car	% that listened most at home
News/Talk	45.45%	54.55%
Rock	66.67%	33.33%
Top 40/Pop	71.43%	28.57%

N= 72
$x^2 = 2.31$, $df = 2$
$p< .40$ (not significant)

While peripheral analyses were being conducted one interestingly strong relationship was discovered. The researchers found, with significance, as satisfaction goes down, the self report attention score fell as well, $F(1, 103)= 8.81$, $p< .01$. This analysis of variance showed that these two variables interact strongly, most likely because less attention is reported when the content is deemed unsatisfactory by a listener.

Gender Difference Analyses

Several statistical analyses were carried out in order to investigate the possibility of gender differences for the attention and loyalty measures. No gender differences were found when analyzing either attention measure, but there were gender differences in format preference, χ^2 (2, N = 88) = 10.55, $p < .01$ (see Table 6). Men listened most to rock stations, while women preferred top 40/pop. Men also listened more to news/talk than females.

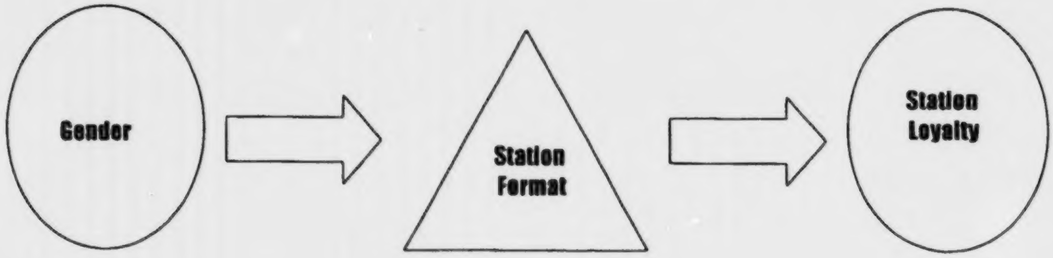
Table 6: Percentage Within Gender of Time Spent Listening to Favorite Station

	Favorite Station Format		
Gender	News/Talk	Rock	Top 40/Pop
Female	11.86%	39.98%	49.15%
Male	24.14%	62.07%	13.79%

χ^2 (2, N = 88) = 10.55, $p < .01$

When station loyalty was examined, a gender effect very close to significance was present, t (80) = 1.98, p = .05. Men (M = 67.52%, SE = 6.69) were giving a higher percentage of time spent listening to their favorite stations than women (M = 51.32%, SE = 4.73). The effect of gender is lost, however, when controlling for the format of the favorite station, F (1, 73) = 2.45, $p < .15$. This was because, as mentioned earlier, a higher percentage of men listened to news/talk stations, and news/talk stations demanded the most station loyalty (see statistics on station loyalty in Table 5). What this communicates is that format is a mediating or intervening variable between the variables of gender and station loyalty (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Gender and Station Loyalty Relationship



DISCUSSION

From this study, it is fair to draw several conclusions. First, though rock listeners show the highest level of attention based on station information recall, this may be because of the manner in which this information is presented. Because the boisterous and frequent manner in which rock stations proclaim their station information is more striking than the calm and taciturn way in which news/talk stations tend to present their information, rock listeners are more likely to remember this information.

It has been shown that news/talk listeners are more loyal to their news/talk stations than are rock or top 40/pop listeners. Because of this it can be assumed that news/talk listeners listen more to the same station, and that they feel more dedicated to their news/talk station.

People who listen to the radio at home seem to pay more attention than do people who listen at work or in the car, but this data is not statistically significant. One reason the researchers feel this may be happening is that over half of the at-home listeners are news/talk radio listeners. This is an interesting facet of the results and something that should be considered if a phase-2 study is conducted.

The researchers discovered that the recall and self report measures were not at getting at the same concept. Future researchers employing attention measures can benefit from this knowledge and these two measures can be employed independently and considered two separate measures because they do not correlate statistically.

After evaluating this, researchers concluded that when respondents were asked to report their attention given to the radio, they reported on their attention to radio *content* as opposed to station information. That is, they pay attention to songs and programs as opposed to station identification. This suggests that survey research using only self-report measures are applicable only to programming content and not advertising or station identification, even though self report-based research is traditionally applied to advertising as well.

In discovering that listeners' self reported level of attention paid to the radio does not include attention paid to advertising, researchers have allowed companies to reconsider their approach to advertising on the radio. If future research continues to support the idea that listeners discount advertising as content, it may nullify previous research by organizations such as the RTNDF (2000) showing that listeners give high levels of attention to radio, including advertising. Further studies would have to be formed to better understand how listeners differentiate between advertising-based and format-based content.

Most implications of this research are primarily practical. Persons involved with advertising on news/talk stations may wish to consider their current practices of purchasing air time on these stations, since the research can safely say that the audience remains consistent in terms of loyalty. This could benefit advertisers who may wish to mount a lengthy advertising campaign, or who may wish to develop a stronger branding methodology. Greater loyalty can also mean lower turnover of audience members, which implies that more of the same people are listening to the same news/talk station over a longer period of time.

Conversely, rock and top 40/pop advertisers may want to be aware that their ads may not be heard repeatedly on their respective stations. Rock and top 40/pop stations traditionally have a higher turnover rate of listeners which could affect listener loyalty to a station or a product. Fewer people tuned in to a station for less time could harm advertising revenue. Radio advertisers should be aware of this concept and strive to adapt their advertising methods accordingly.

News/talk stations should feel confident that their listeners are a loyal population. If however, news/talk stations wish to have their listeners remember station information, they may have to take a more aggressive approach in presenting it.

Limitations

Two kinds of limitations existed within this study: sample-based limitations and method-based limitations. While none of these limitations are severe enough to discredit the findings of the study, they should be noted and addressed in potential future research. Were the researchers to conduct a phase-2 of this study, the following limitations would be taken into consideration in study redesign.

In State College, Pennsylvania, where the study was conducted, only two news/talk radio stations exist. In contrast, five rock stations broadcast to the area. Because of this it is possible that news/talk listeners' loyalty does not reflect a particular tendency among these listeners, but rather exists only out of necessity. If a news/talk listener divides his/her time evenly among all (both) the news/talk stations, their loyalty rate is 50%, whereas if a Rock listener does the same, his/her loyalty rate is only 20%.

The population surveyed was also less then ideal. All news talk radio and National Public Radio use is positively correlated with age, income, and education (RTNDF, 2000). The demographic studied only represents above average education but is actually somewhat young and possibly has a lower income than most news/talk listeners. College students also have lower employment levels than the general population and are therefore less likely to listen during the drive time segment from 6:00AM to 10:00AM when people listen to news the most (RTNDF, 2000).

In addition, most of the replies to the survey came from upperclassmen and graduate students. This is most likely because of a "pity effect" in that older students are more likely to understand the difficulty of graduate school and they are therefore more likely to want to help a group of graduate students by participating in the study. Self-selection bias becomes an issue when considering this demographic element of the responding sample.

One methodological problem with the study was that the time spent listening to radio category was operationalized ordinaly in categories such as 0-2. This should have been a ratio level measurement, in which participants could simply report the number of hours spent listening to the radio in the last week. Because of this it is not discernable if participants listened to the radio at all in the 0-2 category.

Because of a CGI script error, the researchers were not able to retrieve, in order, respondents' favorite radio formats. This led to the necessity of coding respondents' favorite formats based on their reported favorite radio stations. Intuitively, this is a rational way to derive this information, though it does remain a limitation of the study.

Research did not control for the number of times per hour each radio station states their station identification information, nor for the manner in which they reported it. For instance, rock and top 40/pop stations tend to have catchy, loud, energetic ways of presenting their slogans and information. NPR and other news/talk stations usually take a more conservative, subtle approach to presenting this information. Because of this, it is more likely that rock and top 40/pop listeners will recall this information because of the manner in which they received it. Perhaps the correlation between recall and format would have supported *H1* had this been taken into consideration.

Radio audiences are notoriously difficult to measure. Radio is available virtually everywhere and at anytime and can be used alone or with any number of people using just one receiver. The amount of attention people pay to radio is equally difficult to measure, with audiences doing everything from passively listening while working or planning to intently listen to a favorite program. Robinson (2000) intuitively claims that most radio listening today is done while doing other things such as driving, working, eating, or surfing the net.

Attention is a difficult concept to measure. In this study, two measures, recall and self-report, were used. Some research on attention has shown, however, that these methods can be problematic (Andreasen, 1984). The measure of recall may have measured attention OR attention and cognition; two different concepts according to Stamm, Johnson, and Martin (1997). In addition, self-report measures are historically problematic. These insights into measuring attention make the measures employed questionable. Given that there is currently no standard, ideal way to measure attention, these methods should stand as acceptable.

The greatest limitation of this study is that is utilized a survey method. Ideally, an experiment, in which participants would be exposed to different formats under uniform conditions, would have yielded more confident results for *H1*. However, due to time and budget constraints this was not possible.

In order to lessen the effects of social desirability on the self-report attention data, a scale broader than the 0-3 could have been used. It is possible that the narrowness of the scale, combined with social desirability driving respondents to say they pay more attention than they actually do, led to a skewed set of self report data. A broader scale may have allowed for social desirability to be spread out over a larger area, minimizing the social desirability effects upon self report attention.

Future Research

Researchers who wish to consider this topic in the future may want to consider several things in order to help them find more accurate and useful results:

1. Researchers should control for the average number of times per hour each radio station broadcasts its call letters, frequency and slogan. Documenting these numbers could help researchers do a better job of connecting and validating their data concerning attention recall rates.
2. A broader scale should be used to measure self reported attention. The self report attention score used a 0 to 3 scale. This squishes the effects that things like social desirability have on the way people respond to a question.
3. Simply relying on a radio station broadcasting its call letters, frequency and/or slogan may not be enough for complete analysis of recall. With radio stations marketing themselves in more creative and innovative ways, future researchers may have to develop more thorough methods of observing and coding station promotion. This could involve consideration of advertising methods such as television ads, billboards, newspaper advertising, Internet advertising and others.

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Appendix A

Original Email

- 8 mile or Symphony #8?
- The Mamas & The Papas or Papa Roach?
- Michael Jackson or Alan Jackson?
- Iraq or the Steelers?
- Joplin or Chopin?

A group of graduate students from the College of Communications is interested in your media use. This short, 5 to 10 minute survey asks you how you use radio, television and other forms of media.

You have been randomly selected via your Penn State email account to participate in this on-line survey. The survey can be accessed by clicking on the web link below:

http://www.personal.psu.edu/users/c/a/cas460/mediasurvey506.htm

Your responses are completely anonymous. All answers will be kept strictly confidential. Complete instructions for taking the survey are located at the top of the web page when you click the above link.

Thank you very much for your time in helping us with this survey!

Sincerely,
Comm 506 Research at Penn State
cas460@psu.edu

By clicking on the link above, you are agreeing to participate in this survey and allow the researchers to use your information in their project. All responses will be kept confidential. Any questions regarding this survey and/or its results should be addressed to the email address listed above.

Appendix B

Reminder Email

Dear Fellow Penn State Students,
We recently emailed to notify you that you have been randomly selected to participate in a short survey on media use. Your participation in this study will be extremely helpful to a group of Graduate Students in the College of Communications.

If you have taken the survey already, we sincerely thank you for your participation. If you have not, please take 5-10 minutes, click on the link below, and complete the survey.

http://www.personal.psu.edu/users/c/a/cas460/mediasurvey506.htm

We hope you are all having good luck with your end-of-the-semester projects and tests. Thank you so much for your time and efforts.

Sincerely,
COMM 506 Graduate Students
Craig Stark
Thomas Smee
Jessica Matthews
Amanda Rotondo

Appendix C

MEDIA SURVEY

Instructions

Please answer the following questions as they relate to you. Please be sure to answer every question on the survey. Use your Tab button or your mouse to move between fields. Click the "Submit Your Responses" button when you are finished.

YOUR MEDIA PREFERENCES

1. **Please list the call letters, frequency, city of origin and slogan of your favorite radio stations.**

(Rank up to three) **(Example: WZYX, 90.5, Huntsville, "Hot 90.5")**

- Call letters, frequency, city of origin and slogan of your favorite radio station
- Call letters, frequency, city of origin and slogan of your second favorite radio station
- Call letters, frequency, city of origin and slogan of your third favorite radio station

2. **Please tell us the percentage of time you spent over the last week listening to each radio station you listed in Question #1.** ***(Percentage must add up to 100%)***

(Example: WZYX 50%)

- Favorite radio station %
- Second favorite radio station %
- Third favorite radio station %

Please list the call letters, frequency, and slogan of your favorite State College radio stations. (*Rank up to three)*

3. **PLEASE NOTE: If your response to this question is the same as your response to Question #1, please leave this question blank. If your response is different than your response in Question #1, then please answer this question. Leave this question blank ONLY if your response is the same as your response in Question #1.**

- Call letters, frequency and slogan of your favorite State College radio station
- Call letters, frequency and slogan of your second favorite State College radio station
- Call letters, frequency and slogan of your third favorite State College radio station

4. **On average, how much attention do you pay when listening to the favorite State College radio station you entered in Question #3?**

○ Close attention
○ Moderate attention
○ Little attention
○ No attention

5. **Please tell us what percentage of your overall radio listening is done on the Internet.**

%

6. **From the following list, please select your favorite radio formats. *(Select up to three)***

☐ Classical
☐ Classic Rock
☐ Country
☐ Folk
☐ Hip Hop/Rap/R&B
☐ Jazz/Blues

☐ News/Talk
☐ Oldies
☐ Rock
☐ Soft Rock
☐ Sports
☐ Techno/Progressive Rock
☐ Top 40/Pop
☐ World Music

7. **Please tell us the percentage of time you spent over the last week listening to each radio format that you selected in Question #6. *(Percentage must add up to 100%)***

- Percentage of time spent listening to your favorite format over the last week. ☐ %
- Percentage of time spent listening to your second favorite format over the last week. ☐ %
- Percentage of time spent listening to your third favorite format over the last week. ☐ %

8. **Over the last week, on average how many hours per day did you listen to the radio?**

○ 0-2 hours
○ 3-6 hours
○ 7-10 hours
○ Over 10 hours

9. **In terms of percentage, please tell us the amount of time you spend listening to the radio... *(Percentage must add up to 100%)***

- At home ☐ %
- At work ☐ %
- In the car ☐ %

10. Do you have Internet access at your place of residence?

○ Yes

○ No

11. Please list your favorite television stations, beginning with your most favorite. *(Rank up to three)*

(Example: CNN, WTAJ, Weather Channel, etc.)

- Favorite television station
- Second favorite television station
- Third favorite television station

12. Do you own a CD player at your place of residence?

○ Yes

○ No

13. Please indicate your satisfaction level with the overall quality of radio in the State College area.

○ 1 - Very dissatisfied

○ 2 - Mostly dissatisfied

○ 3 - Somewhat dissatisfied

○ 4 - Somewhat satisfied

○ 5 - Mostly satisfied

○ 6 - Very satisfied

14. Are you a subscriber to a satellite radio service such as XM or Sirius?

○ Yes

○ No

ABOUT YOU

15. What is your age?

16. What is your sex?

○ Male
○ Female

17. What is your major?

18. What is your year in school?

○ Freshman
○ Sophomore
○ Junior
○ Senior
○ Graduate student

19. Which of the following best describes your racial or ethnic background?

○ Asian
○ Black/African American
○ White/Caucasian
○ Hispanic
○ Native American
○ Other
○ Choose not to answer

Running head: RACE AND GENDER

Race and Gender: An Analysis of the Sources and Reporters in the Networks' Coverage of the Year 2000 Presidential Campaign

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ABSTRACT: Race and Gender: An Analysis of the Sources and Reporters in the Networks' Coverage of the Year 2000 Presidential Campaign

More than 50 years after Hutchins' Commission on Freedom of the Press and more than 30 years after the Kerner Commission, American discourse still focuses on racial disparities and the lack of minority representation in the media.

Decades later, our content analysis of 333 campaign stories broadcasted by *ABC*, *CBS* and *NBC* during the 2000 presidential election found minimal representation of minorities and women as reporters and as non-candidate sources. However, stories by women and minority reporters were more likely to use and give time to women and minority non-candidate sources than did stories by male and Caucasian reporters. Moreover, women and minority reporters were also more likely to use and give time to male and Caucasian non-candidate sources than did stories by male and Caucasian reporters.

The Race and Gender of Sources and Reporters in the Networks' Coverage of the Year 2000 Presidential Election

INTRODUCTION

More than half of likely voters regularly obtain information about political campaigns from either network or local television news coverage ("News Source of Choice," 2000). Given the high visibility of national elections, reporters see election reporting as one of their central missions. Social responsibility norms emphasize that reporters as gatekeepers provide citizens with information from "all sides" to guide election voting. Moreover, social responsibility in news reporting means that stories reflect a diversity of race, gender and opinion to allow citizens to make educated assessments of issues and election decisions. How, if at all, is newsroom diversity related to stories that fulfill such social responsibility goals?

The purpose of this study was to examine race and gender representation of reporters and sources on *ABC, CBS* and *NBC* during the year 2000 presidential election, and related coverage to race, gender and other source-type diversity. The goal of such an analysis is to assess whether arguments to diversify set forth by the Hutchins' Commission and Kerner Commission several decades ago are still valid.

Are we still "separate and unequal" in the news?

In 1942, *Time* magazine founder Henry Luce asked former Yale classmate Robert Hutchins to head the Commission on Freedom of the Press to explore mounting problems facing the press such as the concentration of mass media ownership. In 1947 the group promulgated a social responsibility code that included the requirement that the press show a "representative picture of the constituent groups in society." Peterson (1956) further explicated,

> this requirement would have the press accurately portray the social groups, the Chinese and the Negroes, for example, since persons tend to make decisions in terms of favorable or unfavorable images and a false picture can subvert accurate judgment (p. 91).

Two decades later following urban riots during the first half of the 1960s, President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed a Commission to investigate the nation's ethnic tensions. Their "Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders" in 1968 concluded that racism and economic inequality sparked the riots and that if racial divisiveness continued, the country would have two societies, "one black, one white – separate and unequal" ("30 years after," 1998). The Kerner Commission explicitly chided news media executives with "flaunting an affluent white society before nonwhite Americans and called for immediate reform in what was termed 'shockingly backward' hiring practices" (Ziegler and White, 1990, p. 216).

Nearly 10 years later in "Window Dressing on the Set," the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1977) noted that responses to the Kerner report resulted in hiring more minorities in the newsroom and implementing affirmative action programs, but as of the mid-1970s, the numbers of minority[1] reporters at the network level were still low. Stone (1988) found that the numbers of minorities in local TV newsrooms increased through the 1970s and 1980s and hit a plateau in the mid-1980s.

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[1] This report considered the following as members of a minority group: African American, Hispanic, Asian American and Native Americans.

But by 1991, the Radio Television News Directors Association reported that the numbers of women and minorities on local TV news staffs had remained at a standstill, with women at a third and minorities at about 17 percent of TV news staffs ("Media Report," 1992). In 2001, Papper's survey for the RTNDA found that women made up about 39 percent and minorities about 21 percent of the local TV news workforce ("Women and " 2002). The population of local news staff members is coming closer to representing the population: Census 2000 figures show that women make up 50.9 percent of the population whereas minorities made up 24.9 percent of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2001b).

But is this increased presence of women and minorities on the local level reflected on the network level? And does a female and minority presence result in a more representative picture of society sought by the Hutchins Commission and other concerned groups? Do the networks, more than 30 years after the Kerner Commission, still present news through a predominantly white and male filter? Specifically, do female and minority reporters change this filter and facilitate a broader reflection of such groups in news reports? The present research can provide some answers.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Content analysis of news on the network level has found minimal representation of women and minorities as reporters and sources on network news stories, despite the growing minority population (Cann and Mohr, 2001; Liebler & Smith, 1997; McClellan, 1998; Whitney, Fritzler, Jones, Mazarella & Rakow, 1989; Ziegler and White, 1990). Ziegler and White examined a sample of the network newscasts broadcasted in 1987 and 1989 and found that white reporters covered 93 percent of the 332 stories and that 88 percent of the stories were covered by men. In both years, *NBC* had the lowest degree of reporter diversity, with 97 stories reported by white men, 8 by white women and no non-white reporters.

Tyndall's study of the gender of reporters covering network newscasts in 1998 found that overall, women filed 22 percent of the reports, up from 19 percent in 1996 and 14 percent in 1988 (McClellan, 1998). *CBS* had the lowest degree of female representation, while *ABC* had the highest representation. In 1998, 32 percent of all *ABC* reports were filed by women, up from 25 percent in 1996. On *NBC*, women filed only 24 percent of the reports in 1998, up from 17 in 1996, and on *CBS*, only 11 percent of the reports were filed by women in 1998, down from 15 percent in 1996.

A survey by the Center for Media and Public Affairs in 1998 found that overall, 16 of the 20 most visible reporters on network evening news programs were white males ("Women, Minority," 1999). The center's study, however, also found that the proportion of stories reported by women and minorities increased in 1998 from 1996: Overall, women reported 19 percent and minorities (such as African-Americans, Hispanics, Asians and those of other ethnic backgrounds) reported 10 percent of the stories. For three consecutive years, *ABC* led the networks with the highest proportion of women (25 percent) and minority reporters (12 percent). *NBC* had the greatest increase of women, with 17 percent, up from 10 percent in 1996 and the second highest minority representation with 10 percent. The proportion of women represented on *CBS* fell to 14 percent, down from 15 percent in 1997, but minority representation increased from 1 percent in 1997 to 7 percent in 1998.

Studies of diversity in source use have found heavy domination by whites and men. Ziegler and White (1990) also found that of the 1461 sources used, 72 percent of the sources were white men, 9 percent were white women, 15 percent were nonwhite men and 2 percent were nonwhite women; by gender, 88 were men and 12 percent were women. Tyndall's study found that 87 percent of the expert sound bites were from men and 92 percent were from white sources. Only 13 percent of the sound bites were from women and 6 percent were from minorities (McClellan, 1998). Cann and Mohr (2001) found men were over-represented as presenters, reporters and expert sources on five Australian networks, and like Tyndall, Liebler and Smith (1997), they found that male sources were more likely to be shown as experts and women as non-experts or ordinary people.

Even when they are used, African-American sources are also likely to have narrow roles as sources in television news. In "The Black Image in the White Mind," Entman and Rojecki (2000) show that African-Americans are rarely presented as experts in the news and are more likely interviewed as sports and entertainment figures, victims of discrimination, and criminals. The one exception is on black issues, where African-Americans are more likely than whites to be used as experts.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

Previous research has documented, separately, trends in demographic and other characteristics of both journalists and their sources. But the underlying assumption of much of the concern for diversity is that diversified newsrooms are necessary for news stories that appropriately present a diverse society and its perspectives. However, such an assumption may not be justified. Liebler and Smith, for instance, found that reporter gender did not affect news source gender: Reporters of both sexes tended to use more male sources. To begin exploring whether newsroom diversity matters for source-use diversity, the following research questions address race and gender reporter qualities and gender and race source qualities in a high-visibility, national news story --- the 2000 presidential election:

RQ1: What percentage of network stories was covered by women and minority reporters?

RQ2: What percentage of network stories used women and minority non-candidate sources?

Moreover, if the premise of newsroom diversity is correct, then the following hypotheses should be supported:

H1: Female reporters will use women sources in a greater percentage of their stories then will male reporters.

H2: Female reporters will give women sources more time in their stories than will male reporters.

H3: Female reporters will use sources such as experts and ordinary people in a greater percentage of their stories than will male reporters.

H4: Minority reporters will use minorities in a greater percentage of their stories then will Caucasian reporters.

H5: Minority reporters will give minority sources more time in their stories than will Caucasian reporters.

H6: Minority reporters will use sources such as experts and ordinary people in a greater percentage of their stories than will Caucasian reporters.

METHOD

This study explores these questions with a content analysis of the universe of stories broadcasted on the evening newscasts of *ABC, CBS* and *NBC* during the year 2000 presidential campaign. The networks were chosen for study because of their large national audience, their corporate resources to cover the news and because of their own high visibility as news organizations. In other words, the networks should provide a good reflection of the nation as a whole both in their news staffs and in the sources they use in the news.

The 2000 presidential election was chosen for this study because it engages the broadest range of constituencies and concerns about issues. News reports on a presidential election would therefore be more likely than others to reflect this range.

These broadcasts were taped from the Labor Day start of the campaign to the day before Election Day. Election segments were identified based on explicit graphic symbols used by the networks, always accompanied by verbal transitions by anchors. Such segments could consist of one or more stories. Individual stories were often read by an anchor, and were frequently accompanied by visual material and sound bites from the campaign. Most commonly, however, anchors introduced stories from reporters who covered the Bush and Gore campaigns.

Each story in a multi-story segment could therefore be easily identified by the transition to a separate journalist. Race and gender of reporters were recorded for each story. The content analysis focused explicitly on the use of personal sources in these stories. Such sources of course, included George Bush, Al Gore and their running mates. But up to six non-candidate sources were also coded for each story.

The researchers coded the length of each source's sound bite, his or her gender, race and source type. Length of sound bite was recorded in seconds and gender was coded as male or female. Race was coded as Asian, African American, Caucasian, American Indian and Alaska Native, or Native Pacific Islander.[2]

Four general source types were also included. These were: Partisan sources who made explicit assertions supporting Bush, Gore, Nader and Buchanan; Horse Race Expert sources identified from academe, polling or consulting companies, who did NOT make explicit candidate endorsements and who were explicitly cited for their credentials to assess candidate prospects for success; Issue Expert sources identified from academe, government or interest groups, who did NOT make explicit candidate endorsements and who were explicitly cited for their credentials to provide interpretation or context for election issues; Ordinary Person sources who neither made explicit candidate endorsements nor have horse race or issue expert status.

Reliability of Measures

The coding procedure employed in this study initially had one researcher and two research assistants identify election-relevant stories and another researcher validating that judgment. Two researchers coded the above source and reporter characteristics in the stories. A coder reliability assessment was made on about 10 percent of the relevant randomly sampled election stories. Percentage of agreement on the variables relevant for this analysis ranged between 81 percent and 100 percent. Scott's Pi computations to correct for chance agreement ranged from .78 to 1.0.

Analysis

Questions and hypotheses posed in this study are addressed by computing the proportions of stories in which non-candidate sources were used and by computing means for their sound bite lengths. All stories on the 2000 election from designated evening newscasts were assessed, so inferential statistics are not necessary for generalization.

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[2] The researchers determined race by physical appearance, paying close attention to skin color, hair texture and facial features. Surnames also helped in some cases to determine race. In rare cases, the race of the individual was mentioned in the story. Hispanics were not coded because of the uncertainties that arose in identifying members of this group based on physical features and surname.

RESULTS

The researchers coded 333 election-relevant stories, which were almost evenly distributed among the three networks: *ABC* aired 115, *CBS* aired 105 and *NBC* aired 113.

Female reporters covered 70 (21%) of the 333 stories and male reporters covered 263 (79%) of the stories. Therefore, male reporters covered nearly four-times more stories than female reporters. African American reporters covered 31 (9%) of the total stories and Caucasian reporters covered the rest, 302 (91%) stories. The researchers did not observe any reporters who were Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, or Native Pacific Islander. Only about a quarter of sources were female, and less than 10 percent were minority.

Research Question Results

RQ1 probed the percentage of network stories reported by women and minority reporters. Although overall, the percentage of stories reported by women was less than 25 percent, this varied by network. *NBC* had the highest percentage (47%) of their stories covered by female reporters, followed by *ABC* (12%) and *CBS* (3%). Similarly while minority reporters covered less than 10 percent of stories, networks also differed significantly. *CBS* had the highest percentage of its stories (28%) covered by minority reporters, whereas *ABC* and *NBC* had about 1 percent of their stories covered by minority reporters.

RQ2 probed the percentage of network stories using non-candidate female and minority sources. Overall, female sources were used in 26 percent of stories. Female sources were used in 23 percent of *CBS* stories, in 24 percent of *ABC* stories and in 31 percent of *NBC* stories. Minority sources were used in 8 percent of stories. They were used in about 7 percent of *CBS* stories, in 9 percent of *ABC* stories and in 7 percent of *NBC* stories. Individual networks therefore showed much less variation in the use of such sources.

Hypothesis Tests

H1 predicting that female reporters would use women sources in a greater percentage of their stories then would male reporters *was* supported. Female reporters used female non-candidate sources in nearly twice the percentage of their stories than did male reporters in their stories (See Table 1). In fact, female reporters also used male non-candidate sources in a greater percentage of their stories than did male reporters.

H2 predicting that female reporters would give women sources more time in their stories than would male reporters *was* supported. Female reporters gave female sources about 2.5 seconds more time in stories than male reporters gave to female sources (See Table 1). On average, however, female reporters also gave more time to male sources than they did to female sources.

H3 that predicted that female reporters would use expert sources in a greater percentage of their stories than would male reporters *was* supported. As presented in Table 3, female reporters used partisan, horse race, issue and ordinary person sources in a higher percentage of their stories than did male reporters. The difference in the use of these sources by male and female reporters ranged from 9 to 22 percentage points.

H4 predicting that minority reporters would use minorities in a greater percentage of their stories then would Caucasian reporters *was* supported. Minority reporters used minority sources in twice the percentage of their stories as did Caucasian reporters (See Table 2). Minority reporters also used Caucasian non-candidate sources in a greater proportion of their stories than did Caucasian reporters.

H5 predicted that minority reporters would give minority sources more time in their stories than would Caucasian reporters *was* supported, although the difference in time averaged less than two seconds (See Table 2). Moreover, African American reporters gave Caucasian sources more than five seconds longer to talk then Caucasian reporters gave Caucasian sources.

H6 predicting that minority reporters would use sources such as experts and ordinary people in a greater percentage of their stories than would Caucasian reporters was *partially* supported. As presented in Table 4, minority reporters used horse race and issue expert sources in a higher percentage of their stories than did Caucasian reporters, but those differences were only 5 percentage points respectively.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Our content analysis of network news coverage of the year 2000 presidential campaign might disappoint members of the Kerner Commission and others who decried the media's tendency to "flaunt an affluent white society before nonwhite Americans." In our study, Caucasians and men were over-represented as reporters and sources on network news, replicating earlier research on network news coverage. More than a decade ago, Ziegler and White (1990) in their study of network newscasts in 1987 and 1989 found that Caucasian reporters covered 93 percent of the 332 stories and that 88 percent of the reporters were men. Tyndall's study of network newscasts showed that Caucasian reporters covered 90 percent of the networks' stories and that 78 percent of the reporters were men (McClellan, 1998). A survey conducted for the Center for Media and Public Affairs showed that in 1998, Caucasian reporters covered 90 percent of network stories and 81 percent of network reporters were men ("Media Report," 1999).

In this study, we found that Caucasian reporters covered 91 percent of the 333 network stories and that 79 percent of the reporters were men. However, while the survey for the center found African-American, Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native or Native Pacific Islander reporters, we only found African-American reporters. Our results are even more disconcerting when considering the growing numbers of minorities: Census 2000 figures show that one out of two people in the United States are women and one out of four identify themselves as belonging to a minority group (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2001b).

Our study also replicated Tyndall and the center's findings regarding the under-representation of female reporters across networks. What is disturbing is that our findings skewed even further toward men. Like Tyndall and the center's studies, we found that *CBS* had the lowest degree of female representation among the networks. Tyndall found that only 11 percent of *CBS*' stories were reported by women and the center found that women filed only 14 percent of CBS's stories; we found that women filed only 3 percent of *CBS'* stories. On *ABC*, Tyndall found women filed 32 percent of all reports and the center's study found women covered 25 percent of the stories in 1998; we found only 12 percent of the *ABC* stories filed were from female reporters. However, we differed dramatically on our findings on *NBC*. Tyndall found that women filed 24 percent of the reports and the center's survey found women filed 17 percent of the reports, and we found that women filed 47 percent of the stories.

This study also replicated Liebler and Smith's (1997) results in that reporters of both sexes tended to use male sources in more stories and gave them more time to speak per story than female sources. In fact, female reporters gave male sources on average four more seconds than female sources and gave female sources. Liebler and Smith gave two explanations for such a finding:

> One is that organizational and extra-organizational levels are still more influential than the individual in deciding who and what constitutes news. The other related explanation is that women have been socialized into "male" definitions of newsworthiness and report accordingly.

These findings challenge the assumption that the hiring of more women and minorities result in a more diverse reflection of society in news reports. Some findings also suggest that female reporters on the network level have more of a bias toward male sources and Caucasian sources than male reporters. More research, both quantitative and qualitative, needs to be conducted to discover if and why this is so before suggestions are made to discard increased hiring of minorities as a solution to the lack of diversity in network news.

Our study did however, show that women and minorities reported stories using a broader mix of non-candidate sources of all types than did stories by male and Caucasian reporters. Indeed when it came to reporting the 2000 election, male and Caucasian reporters were more likely to focus exclusively on the candidates themselves, even to the exclusion of other types of sources. This content study cannot illuminate why this was so. Possibly women and minority reporters were explicitly assigned to do broader campaign stories in which different sourcing would be necessary. Focused interviews with reporters and even participant observation of their news coverage activities may help explain the patterns found in this study.

The results of this study also have practical relevance in the continuing discussion about newsroom and news story diversity. Since the Hutchins Commission, discussion on diversity issues has led to efforts to hire females and minorities in part to create a more diversified news product. More creative methods to increase diverse voices and faces as sources in the news emerged in recent years. For example, *ABC* news managers amassed a database of 480 minority sources, and news staff managers have told employees that their job performance evaluation will in part rely on the number of sources in this database that they contact. *CBS* and *NBC* report similar requirements ("ABC ties," 2002).

While findings from this research do not address the social value per se of increased hiring of female and minority reporters, they do have implications for how hiring decisions affect news coverage. Newsroom policies and resources may also have a powerful influence on diversity in news source use. But neither hiring nor policy decisions seem to have yet produced dramatic changes in news sourcing.

Debates on race and gender in the news media must certainly take place in a broader context that includes newsroom norms and values. Certainly research is needed to assess how well diversity is achieved. But journalists must first define what they mean by that word, and how important diversity is relative to other news organization and news value imperatives.

TABLES

Table 1. Gender of reporter and gender of non-candidate source by %, time and Avg. sound bite length

Time given to non-candidate sources	Gender of Reporter Male (n=263)	Female(n=70)
Sound bites in % of stories		
Male	43%	67%
Female	22%	41%
Avg. sound bite length		
Male	6.55	10.90
Female	3.23	5.87

Table 2. Race of reporter and race of non-candidate source by %, time and Avg. sound bite length

Time given to non-candidate sources	Race of Reporter Afr. Am. (n=31)	Caucasian (n=302)
Sound bites in % of stories		
Minority	16%	6%
Caucasian	80%	51%
Avg. sound bite length		
Minority	1.30	.63
Caucasian	15.20	10.10

Table 3. Gender of reporter and frequency of type of non-candidate source

Type of non- candidate sources	Gender of Reporter Male (n=263)	Female(n=70)
Partisan Source	30%	43%
Horse Race Expert	9%	33%
Issue Expert	11%	20%
Ordinary Person	17%	27%

Table 4. Race of reporter and frequency of type of non-candidate source

Type of non-candidate sources	Race of Reporter African Am. (n=31)	Caucasian (n=302)
Partisan	61%	30%
Horse Race Expert	19%	13%
Issue Expert	16%	13%
Ordinary Person	19%	19%

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The Changing Role of Sports in Local Television News

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Abstract

A study was conducted to assess how the sports segment within the local television newscast is changing. Literature suggests that many stations are eliminating or otherwise revising the sports segment in response to industry conditions.

Results indicated changes, but more in terms of style and presentation than in time allotment. The sports segment is emphasizing more localism and appealing to casual fans. Major factors for change were audience ratings and competition from all-sports networks. The implications of these changes for the broadcast industry and journalism education were discussed.

The Changing Role of Sports in Local Television News

Introduction

If there has been a constant throughout the history of television in the U.S., it has been local news. Almost from the time stations first signed on the air they began delivering local news content. For example, just six weeks after WGAL in Lancaster, Pennsylvania went on the air in March of 1949, the station began broadcasting a 15-minute program dedicated to local news ("The WGAL tradition," 2003). The marriage between television and local news bloomed across the country in the following years, and by the turn of the new century, television had became the dominant news provider for most Americans. While most people get their information from a variety of media sources, a majority (56%) get their news from television, and especially local newscasts ("Changing channels," 1996).

Sports has played an integral part in the development of television and within the local newscast. Lacking a consistent source of programming in the early days of the medium, many stations turned to sports to fill their broadcasting schedule. WNBT television in New York (now WNBC) signed on the air in July of 1941, and its very first telecast was a baseball game between Brooklyn and Philadelphia ("NBC history," 2003). Sports also became an important part of the local newscast. Each station developed its newscast to suit its own particular viewing audience, but evidence suggests that many stations included sports and weather in these programs. In 1961, for example, WKMG started the first full-time news department in Orlando, Florida. The 25-minute newscast included a sports report by Frank Vaught ("The history of," 2003).

Sports maintained an unchallenged position in the local newscast for several years, but recent trends within the industry and within local news have called this position into question. Fragmenting audiences, changing demographics and declining news profitability have all caused stations to reexamine the role of sports within their local newscasts. "Sports is one of the last areas of TV where people do things the way they've always done them," says Elliott Wiser, general manager of a 24-hour cable news channel in Tampa, Florida. "You have to have a new approach," (Deggans, 2000).

This study sought to investigate the changes affecting sports within the local television newscast. Specifically, it attempted to assess the nature, cause and direction of those changes, and where local television sports seems to be headed in the future. These changes were also considered in the broader perspective of the effect they might have on journalism education and the broadcast news industry as a whole.

The Problem for Local TV News

Several factors have combined to threaten the supremacy of television as the main provider of news for U.S. news consumers. According to a study conducted by the Project for Excellence in Journalism (2002), television newscasts are losing viewers. In 1998, two-thirds of all stations reported a decline in viewership for their local newscasts. By 2002, that number had risen to 76%. Even in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in September 2001, local news viewership fell seven percent.

There are various explanations for this decline. The emergence of media sources such as the Internet, cable channels and home satellite has given viewers an alternative to local television news. According to research from the Radio and Television News Director's Association ("Changing channels," 1996) a "significant portion of the public tunes into a variety of other sources on a regular basis." This includes 39% who report regularly watching the Weather

Channel, 33% who listen to an all-news or public radio station, and 21% who watch CNN Headline News.

Alternative media such as the Internet and personal computers are especially attractive to younger news consumers. This may explain what the RTNDA study called a generation gap in news exposure. "While generational differences in news consumption are not uncommon," the report noted, "the generation gap is larger today than in the past, and many in the youngest [age group] may never pick up the habit of exposure to news programming as they age" ("Changing channels," 1996). The report stated that these trends represent a threat to the news audiences of the future.

Smaller, fragmented news audiences usually translate into lower ratings. Combined with other recent factors such as increasing station consolidation, a soft economy and weak advertising revenue, the result is threatened profitability for local newscasts. Much has been made about the recent trend of television station consolidation, a situation created by relaxed ownership rules from the Federal Communications Commission. According to Bagdikian (2000), only six companies now control the country's most widespread news, commentary and daily entertainment programming.

As more and more stations become controlled by larger media companies, local television news has become much more bottom-line oriented. In the first few weeks of 2002, for example, three station groups decided to completely eliminate local news at their subsidiary stations (Trigoboff, 2002a). Even major market stations are not safe, as KDNL in St. Louis dropped its local newscast in 2002. That same year, Viacom considered dropping the late newscasts at both of its stations in Detroit, the 10th largest market in the country (Trigoboff, 2002b).

The elimination of several newscasts around the country came during a tough time for the broadcast advertising market and the economy in general. Broadcast stations began to feel the advertising pinch in 2001, when NBC led the major networks in selling advertising inventory at cost per thousand (CPM) decreases of 5% compared to the previous year ("Network upfront," 2001). And broadcasters face serious competition for advertising from cable. By 2004, basic ad-supported cable will pass broadcast in ad revenue for the first time (Chunovic, 2001).

Given these factors, it should not be surprising that media companies and individual stations have begun to reexamine their local newscasts. In some cases, the news has been dropped entirely. At the very least, broadcast executives have taken a long, hard look at how to streamline local news and make it more profitable. "I think there's going to be a shakeout," said Jim Willi, consultant for Audience Research and Development. "Do we really need to have four or five newscasts in the same market at the same time?" (Trigoboff, 2002a).

The Problem for Local TV Sports

None of this is good news for the local television sports segment, which has come under increasing scrutiny from station news executives. Despite its traditional presence within the local newscast, sports has long been considered a "tune out" factor, and is usually limited to a few minutes at the end of the show. Almost all research supports the idea that viewers of local television newscasts are not that interested in the sports segment. A survey by the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation indicated that only 31% of all viewers said they were 'very interested' in the sports segment, while 32% said they were 'somewhat interested'

("Journalism and ethics," 1998). This compared to 72% who expressed an interest in the weather, and 65% who expressed an interest in local crime. "Sports is extremely polarizing," said Brent Magid, president of Frank Magid Associates, a television consulting firm. "Avid sports viewers are a distinct minority. The majority can either take it or leave it, or despise it" (Greppi, 2002).

Is also appears that this 'distinct minority' of hard-core sports fans has turned away from the local newscast and found its sports information in other places. The emergence of 24-hour sports cable networks, and Internet sites completely devoted to sports information, has given the sports fan an alternative to the local news. ESPN, for example, broadcasts its "SportsCenter" show three times a day, and then repeats it the next morning. "SportsCenter is appointment viewing for the hardcore sports fan," said Rich Lenz, sports director at WDSU in New Orleans. "If you're a hardcore sports fan, you may feel like you've died and gone to heaven for an hour" (Huff, 2002).

This often creates a situation where the audience loyal to the local television newscast does not have any interest in sports. This is particularly appropriate for early evening newscasts, such as those at four or five p.m., where a heavily female audience remains with the newscast after watching shows like *Oprah* or *Maury*. Research suggests that women have much less interest in the sports segment compared to men, and many stations have acted accordingly. "You don't want to do anything that chases away [the sports] audience," says Dan Bradley, vice president of news at WFLA in Tampa, which completely dropped sports from its 5 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. newscasts in 2000. "But you also don't want to spend too much time on something your audience could care less about" (Deggans, 2000). Rival station WTSP also dropped sports from both of its early evening newscasts. According to station news director Jim Church, "Telling a story when nobody's listening is not a good use of air time" (Deggans, 2000).

In the face of these difficult realities, stations across the country have taken different courses of action regarding their sports segments. A growing number of stations have joined WTSP and WFLA in simply dropping sports from the local newscast. That includes KVBC in Las Vegas, now doing sports on "as needed basis," according to news director Mike George (Schafer, 2000).

Instead of completely eliminating sports, many stations have reduced the time allotted for it. Depending on the day of the week (weekends are much more sports-oriented), sports segments have traditionally received anywhere from three to five minutes of the local newscast. Now that number has dropped to as little as a minute. In 2002, KDKA in Pittsburgh revamped its sports segment and now provides only three and a half minutes of sports during its three hours of news programming. News director Al Blinke said the station was cutting the time allotted for sports almost in half in order to "consolidate our sports programming" (Finder, 2002).

In addition to time allotment, stations are also implementing changes that directly affect the presentation and look of the sports segment. Many of these changes have been designed to make the segment more 'female-friendly' and appealing to non-traditional sports fans. In some cases, sports has become more entertainment-oriented, reflecting the overall trend toward 'infotainment' in news. Many sports anchors have adopted a style based less on scores and information, and more on engaging personalities. According to media writer Phil Rosenthal (1999, p. 40), "Humor has always had a place in sportscasting, but lately there seems to be more jokes than scores. The sports might well be delivered in front of a plain brick wall, like every other stand-up comedy show on TV."

Typical of the entertainment-oriented sportscaster is Bernie Smilovitz, who has built a successful 15-year career at WDIV in Detroit. "My slant on sports is that I do sports for everybody and I do anything to get them to watch," says Smilovitz. "I try to reach the housewife who doesn't care about sports" (as cited in Schultz, 2001, p. 233). Many sportscasters have joined Smilovitz in reaching out to women, or other audience members considered 'non-traditional' or 'casual' viewers. Many in the industry have implemented new approaches, such as sports stories that focus more on people than scores, or that cater to more of a news audience. "The reality of it is, what we're trying to do now is treat sports more as news," says Blinke. "There are so many sports channels out there that do hits, runs and errors. We want to do the stuff that transcends sports" (Finder, 2002).

One thing that does not transcend sports is simply repeating national scores and hilights, as localism has become a byword in television newsrooms across the country. In a survey conducted by CONUS Communications, a leading news programming provider, most local news executives expressed a strong demand for local and regional news. The same executives indicated a very low interest in national sports hilights ("Newsroom executives," 2001). "You can't compete with ESPN," said Jim Henderson, sports director at WWL in New Orleans. "SportsCenter has made us concentrate more on local stories" (Huff, 2002).

Research Questions and Methodology

These conditions prompted the following research questions related to the status of the sports segment within a local television newscast:

RQ1: Is the sports segment within the local television newscast changing, and if so, how?

RQ2: What, if any, factors are most responsible for causing or influencing this change?

RQ3: Do these changes have differing effects on different groups of stations? For example, do any changes differentiate between stations based on such demographic factors as market size, audience ratings, geographic area, etc.?

RQ4: Where does the sports segment within the local newscast appear headed in the future?

These questions were investigated with a postal questionnaire of stations across the U.S. Stations were selected from industry sources such as the *Broadcasting & Cable Yearbook* (2002) and *www.100000watts.com* to create a stratified sample of news directors. The sample contained the names of 340 news directors, who received a questionnaire related to the study. News directors were chosen for the questionnaire because they are the ones with direct control over placement, time allotment and presentation style of the sports segment within a newscast. While sports anchors give the on-air performance, they often have little control over the actual show, aside from issues of content.

The questionnaire was mailed in accordance with Dillman's (2000) total design method, which emphasizes several contacts based on a social exchange theory to improve response. Pre-notification letters were sent the second week of January 2003, informing news directors of the project and telling them that they would soon receive the questionnaire. Four letters were returned as undeliverable, lowering the sample size to 336. The questionnaire and a cover letter were sent the following week. Initial response to the mailing was 135, a response rate of 40%. This was followed with e-mail and phone reminders to those that had not returned the questionnaire. This yielded an additional 28 responses. Data collection was then cut off the third week of March 2003. In total, 163 valid responses were collected, for a response rate of 49%. The high response rate seemed to reflect the level of interest in the topic and its relevance for study.

Results

RQ1: Is the sports segment within the local television newscast changing, and if so, how?

Most stations (84%) reported that the local sports segment within their major evening newscast gets three to four minutes of time. This compares to 11% which reported one to two minutes, and 5% which reported five or more minutes. It also appears that the time devoted to sports within the newscast is declining slightly. Stations were specifically asked about changes in time allotted to the local sports segment. With a one representing 'significant decrease' in time and a seven representing 'significant increase' in time, the mean response was 3.50—almost a neutral position.

In addition, not many stations were willing to completely eliminate the sports segment from their newscasts. With one representing 'very willing to eliminate' and seven representing 'completely unwilling to eliminate,' the mean response to the question was 5.32. More than 70% of respondents said they were unwilling to completely eliminate sports from the newscast.

In contrast to time considerations, stations are considering other changes to their local sports segments, including changes to style, presentation and content (see Table 1). The overwhelming response was more emphasis on local sports coverage and less coverage of national sports (62%), followed by more feature-oriented stories (14%). There was a smaller percentage of stations (12%) that planned to make no changes at all.

RQ2: What, if any, factors are most responsible for causing or influencing this change?

News directors were specifically asked what factors would influence the changes occurring within the local sports segment (see Table 2). The most frequent response was relative importance of sports in market (43%), followed by growth of all-sports networks (22%) and audience research or ratings (21%).

These factors were then tested against specific changes considered by the stations, such as changes in time, content, etc. (see Table 3). The results of a correlation indicated that audience perception of the sports segment ($r = .45$, $r^2 = .20$, $p < 0.01$) and ratings ($r = .43$, $r^2 = .18$, $p < 0.01$) were the most influential factors for stations that changed the time allotted for sports. The higher the audience ratings and perception of the sports segment, the more time the station devoted to sports. This also held true for stations that had a sports segment with a high financial viability ($r = .21$, $r^2 = .04$, $p = .007$). Stations that viewed other all-sports networks as detrimental ($r = -.40$, $r^2 = .16$, $p < 0.01$) were much more likely to reduce the time allotted to sports.

> RQ3: Do these changes have differing effects on different groups of stations? For example, do any changes differentiate between stations based on demographic factors?

Each news director provided demographic information for his or her station, including market size, type of ownership, geographic area, etc. This information was then tested against the changes indicated by the individual stations. In terms of the change in time allotted to the sports segment, analyses of variance were conducted (see Table 4). The ANOVAs suggested that audience ratings ($F = 4.12$, $df = 4$, $p = .003$) and market size ($F = 2.94$, $df = 4$, $p = .02$) were the most important factors influencing time allotment. Stations with higher audience ratings and stations in smaller markets were much more likely to give more time to sports.

RQ4: Where does the sports segment within the local newscast appear headed in the future?

News directors were specifically asked to predict the direction of the local sports segment (see Table 5). The majority (63%) believed that the sports segment will decline in importance and time allotment. Of this group, 53% said despite this decline, sports will remain in the local newscast. Another 27% said that no significant changes will take place, while only 2% said that sports would increase in importance and time allotment.

Again, it appears that audience ratings and the impact of all-sports networks were influential factors in these predictions (see Table 6). A multiple regression indicated that after controlling for financial stability and audience perception, audience ratings ($\beta = -.11$, $p = .04$) and all-sports networks ($\beta = -.29$, $p < .001$) were significant predictive factors at the .05 level. The higher the audience ratings, the less likely news directors would be to reduce or eliminate the sports segment. A higher detrimental impact of all-sports networks would result in reduction or elimination of the sports segment.

Discussion

Based on the literature, it was expected that many stations would make major changes in time allotment to their sports segments, however that was not supported by the data. Most stations (70%) indicated an unwillingness to completely eliminate sports from their local newscasts. Only 30% of news directors indicated that their stations reduced time for sports, while 9% reported an increase. In addition, the majority (65%) of news directors said they have a very high level of commitment toward the sports segment. Many respondents shared the views of one news director from a small market station in the Northeast, who said, "As long as there is a demand for a local newscast, local sports will have a place in the format."

Instead, the changes taking place in the sports segment have more to do with content, style and presentation. One thing stood out when news directors discussed the changes taking place: localism. Perhaps in an effort to offer viewers a contrast to all-sports networks, local sports segments are becoming more local. They are focusing more on local stories, athletes and events, and making their coverage more feature-oriented and viewer friendly for the casual sports fan. Typical of the responses was the news director of a midsize station in the Midwest, who commented, "We want sports to be interesting to non-sports fans. Here, sports is news, is community. Give the viewer local as opposed to anything the many cable sports channels offer. Only we can go local. They can't."

It is also important to note that the emphasis on localism does not necessarily conflict with changes in time allotment. That is, stations can still reduce the time allotted to sports within the newscast and still emphasize local coverage. Many stations are accomplishing this by showcasing local sports outside the traditional newscast, such as doing special shows oriented around local teams or games. The news director at a large market station in the Southeast noted, "While sports will continue to diminish in the local newscast, we are doing more weekly sports shows. We currently do a weekly 30-minute sportscast once a week. During football season we do two 30-minute sports shows. Doing sports-only broadcasts increases sponsorship possibilities and can turn sports into a profit center."

The increased emphasis on localism supports that findings that audience ratings and competition from all-sports networks are important factors of change. The sports segment is no longer in a position where it can cater only to a small band of hard-core audience members. To survive, it must appeal to the wider audience, which includes more women and casual sports fans. One news director at a small market station in the Southeast said, "Local newscasts can no longer afford the extremely male demographic that dominates the last quarter of most shows. Expanding coverage to sports and leisure strengthens female viewership."

Regarding these changes, there were differences between different groups of stations based on demographic factors. Stations that described themselves as dominant in the ratings devoted more time to sports, as did stations in smaller markets. This is consistent with the literature, especially regarding smaller stations. According to RTNDA figures ("Newsroom profitability," 2001), small market stations rely much more on news to make a profit than do large market stations, and many of these stations use sports programming to create revenue. "For smaller markets sports television is a very reliable source of income," said one news director from a small market station in the upper Midwest. "Our station televises at least 10 live sporting events a year as well as 20 college coaching shows."

As for the future of the sports segment within the local news, news directors were more pessimistic. More than 63% said that in terms of both time and importance, the local sports segment would decline, while only 2% said it would increase. Again, audience ratings and competition from all-sports networks were strong predictive factors. If audience ratings start to lag, or competition from other sports outlets becomes too damaging, news directors are much more likely to cut back on their sports commitment.

This would seem to suggest two distinct time frames for this study—what is currently happening, and what will likely happen in the future. And while the sports segment seems safe for now, news directors have it on a very short leash. One news director at a large market station in the Southwest noted, "I considered eliminating the sports department and reallocating those resources to put more news gatherers on the street. I am reluctant to do so now, but may in the future."

Implications

If the sports segment of the local newscast is changing, as suggested by this study, it has important implications for both journalism education and the broadcast news industry as a whole. Perhaps most importantly, these changes are a reflection of the tremendous upheaval going on throughout broadcast news. Even in times of technological change and economic uncertainty, the local sports segment has evolved slowly over the years. But today, the sports segment is no longer considered a 'sacred cow,' and if it faces major changes, what does that say for other news elements? "[All of this] forces us to reexamine the [news] model," said CBS Group News Vice President Joel Cheatwood (Trigoboff, 2002a).

As part of this reexamination, local broadcast sports is becoming not only more local, but shifting away from traditional standards of journalistic reporting toward a model based on storytelling and personality-oriented coverage. This could be compared to the news networks and their use of 'embedded' reporters to cover the 2003 war in Iraq. Instead of traditional war reporting, in which journalists go out on their own to get stories, most now cover the action with specific military units. This embedding shifts the focus of the reporting away from the actual battle more toward the personalities and lives of the people doing the fighting. Commenting on the embedded reporting, U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld noted, "What we are seeing is not the war in Iraq; what we're seeing are slices of the war in Iraq" ("War, live," 2003).

The implication is that broadcast news is evolving, and the changes in sports may be just the first steps. "We are witnessing, in short, a time of creative ferment in the delivery of news to the American people," concluded the RTNDA report. "Electronic journalism has survived, even flourished, so far by flexibly adapting to the changing electronic media environment. It will continue to flourish if it succeeds in leading the technological and societal changes that affect the delivery of news rather than following or resisting them" ("Changing channels," 1996).

On a more immediate level, changes in the local sports segment directly affect thousands of aspiring sportscasters. According to a report in the *American Journalism Review*, more than 50% of all the males surveyed at three major broadcast journalism schools (Syracuse University, the University of Missouri and Ohio University) wanted a career in sports broadcasting. That compares with just 27% who want to go into television or radio news. "It supports my gut reaction that most of the males come to Ohio University to be about sports," says Eddith Dashiell, associate professor in the university's E.W. Scripps School of Journalism (as cited in Schultz, 2001, p. 189).

Stations that are reducing their commitment to sports are correspondingly reducing their sports staffing levels, which has an obvious impact on the job market. "[Sports in the newscast] is dying," said one news director at a small market station in the Midwest. "That's what our research tells us. We have gone from two full time sports people to one full time and one who works news three days a week, and keeping that position has been a fight."

Just as important, the change in the way sports is presented requires would-be sports broadcasters to learn new techniques and methods. No longer can sportscasters focus on scores and hilights; they must make their presentation more engaging, more local and more interesting for the casual fan. This is also important for journalism schools around the country, which must take note of what stations want in a sports segment, and update their sports broadcasting curricula. "We're looking for more personality/feature stories on a local level," wrote a news director at a midsize station in the Midwest. "I think sports will not change significantly in importance, but local sports will continue to evolve in non-traditional coverage. It will look more and more like local news feature coverage." If sports broadcasting training continues to focus more on traditional reporting, and ignore the emerging demand for personality-based coverage, it will only make things more difficult for the sports broadcasters of tomorrow.

Future Research

This suggests the need for further research in this area, especially since the sports segment seems headed in a different direction from where it is now. This study could certainly be replicated in a year, two years, etc., to further assess what changes have taken place.
It is believed that because of the volatility of the broadcast environment, the situation could change drastically in as little as months. For example, if an independently-owned station is bought by a large media conglomerate, the new station executives might demand more news accountability and require changes to the sports segment.

Another useful idea for research would be a detailed case study of a particular group of stations. Working with stations over the period of several months, or even a year, would give the researcher a better idea of what changes are occurring, how stations are implementing them, and their consequences.

One of the implications of this study is that the results have greater implications for broadcast news as a whole. If that is true, it would be worthwhile to design a similar study to examine what is going on in the broadcast news industry, and to ascertain whether the changes observed in local television sports are also taking place in news.

Conclusions

In response to environmental changes, the sports segment is trying to become more local, more feature-oriented and more viewer-friendly for the causal fan. But will these changes work or even last? Given the current industry environment, many stations may not be willing to commit to unproven methods. Commenting on KDKA's attempt to redefine its local sports segment, sportswriter Chuck Finder (2002) noted, "Let's reserve final judgment until September, when the Steelers, college and high school football seasons fully get underway and deserve ye olde KDKA treatment. We'll see then if the station … errs in clock management."

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Table 1: Specific changes mentioned by news directors to their local sports segments

Change	Percentage response
More local sports	62%
More feature-oriented stories	14%
More non-traditional sports	6%
More emphasis on presentation (anchors, etc.)	3%
More emphasis on diversity	1%
No changes planned	12%
Other	2%

Note: 'Other' responses included reduction of on-air sports staff, expanded local sports shows outside the newscast, etc.

N = 163

Table 2: News director response to factors that influence change within the local sports segment

Factor	Percentage response
Relative importance of sports in your market	43%
Growth of other all-sports channels	22%
Audience research or ratings	21%
Budget and/or costs	10%
Other economic issues related to the local market	4%
Other	0%

N = 163

Table 3: Correlation of planned changes with factors influencing change

Factor	r	r^2	p
Audience perception of sports segment	.44	.19	<.001*
Audience ratings for sports segment	.43	.18	<.001*
Effect of other all-sports networks	-.40	.16	<.001*
Financial viability of sports segment	.21	.04	.007*

Note: *indicates significance at .05 level.

N = 163

Table 4: Analyses of variance for changes and station demographics

Demographic factor	F	df	p
Audience ratings	4.12	4	.003*
Market size	2.94	4	.02*
Type of ownership	1.99	1	.16
Geographic area of the country	0.96	5	.44
Network affiliation	0.42	4	.79

Demographic factor	Compared to	Mean difference
Stations with dominant ratings	Stations with strong ratings	0.55*
Market size 151+	Market size 31-50	0.99*

Note: *indicates significance at the .05 level. A Scheffe test was used to determine the differences in means.

N = 163

Table 5: Prediction of the future of the local sports segment by news directors

Response	Percentage
Continue to decrease in importance and time allotment, but maintain its place in the newscast	53%
Its position in the newscast, in terms of importance and time allotment, will not change significantly	27%
Continue to decrease in importance and eventually be eliminated	10%
Its position in the newscast, in terms of importance and time allotment, will increase in the future	2%
Other	8%

Note: 'Other' includes responses such as decreasing sports in one show and increasing it in another, moving sports within newscast, etc.

N = 163

Table 6: Multiple regression of future changes versus possible factors of change

Variable	β
Effect of all-sports networks	-.345 (.07)**
Audience ratings	-.159 (.05)*
Audience perception	.029 (.06)
Financial viability	-.035 (.06)
Constant	4.21 (.54)
R-square (%)	20.9

Note: Entries are regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

*$p < .05$

**$p < .001$

$N = 163$

Radio-TV

Increasing Candidate-Centered Televised Discourse: Evaluating Local News Coverage of Campaign 2000

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Increasing Candidate-Centered Televised Discourse: Evaluating Local News Coverage of Campaign 2000

ABSTRACT

Content analysis of local television newscasts during Election 2000 showed marked differences between stations participating in two news improvement projects and those stations that did not participate in the "5/30" and "Best Practices" initiatives. Stations participating in those projects offered more news coverage overall and more candidate-centered coverage than did their in-market competitors. Stations enrolling in either of those programs also provided candidates with longer sound bites than did stations not participating in the program.

Introduction

The Alliance for Better Campaigns (Alliance) and its member organizations have been working with the Pew Charitable Trusts' support since 1998 to encourage television broadcasters to improve the coverage of election campaigns. For the 2000 election, the Alliance sought to encourage television broadcasters to provide five minutes per night of "candidate-centered discourse" (which includes discussion of candidates' qualifications, voting record, and views on past, current and emerging public policy issues) during the 30 days before the primary and general elections in 2000. A 1998 White House advisory panel chaired by Vice President Al Gore first recommended this voluntary standard for television coverage of election campaigns.

Wisconsin Public Television (WPT) started its Best Practices (BP) project in 1999 to improve the quality of campaign news coverage using partnerships between affiliates of the Public Broadcasting Service and commercial stations in local media markets around the country. WPT sought to develop and promote campaign coverage that featured substantive issues and provided candidates with the chance to discuss their views on these issues.

The Alliance and WPT projects were designed to determine whether local television stations can be induced to strengthen their coverage of campaigns, particularly in the face of the pressure to attract and keep viewers. This paper assesses whether the television stations participating in these two projects provided coverage quantitatively and qualitatively different from that of nonparticipating stations. These initiatives to improve the quality of television coverage came in the wake of extensive past scholarly research that has criticized the performance of network news coverage of previous elections.

Television News Coverage of Campaigns: Past Research

Scholarly examinations of television's coverage of presidential elections has demonstrated repeatedly that strategic aspects of the campaign dominate the news coverage, rather than the more substantive matters like candidate issue positions and candidate character (Kerbel 1998; Lichter and Noyes 1995; Patterson 1980, 1994; Farnsworth and Lichter 2003). Citizens likewise have found considerable fault with television's coverage of campaigns. Surveys conducted over the past four presidential cycles by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press (formerly Times-Mirror) found that citizens consistently gave the news media poorer grades than the political parties, the candidates and even the much-criticized political consultants (Pew 2000a, 2000c).

A key overall measure of candidate-centered coverage is the amount of time that the candidates have to take their message directly to the viewing audience. This is usually quantified in two formats: (1) the total amount of time candidates have to communicate their thoughts and ideas; and (2) the average length of the individual snippets or sound bites. The total amount of candidate discourse, as well as the length of sound bites, has triggered considerable controversy in recent elections. Studies have shown that the average presidential sound bite on the network evening news shows fell from 42 seconds in the 1968 general election campaign to 10 seconds in the 1992 campaign and to 7.8 seconds in the 2000 general election (cf., Adatto 1990; Farnsworth and Lichter 2003; Kerbel 1995, 1998; Patterson 1994). Candidate opportunities to communicate with voters have declined as reporters have assumed increasingly large roles in shaping political discourse. Reporters often frame news coverage around strategic considerations, that is, how issues are being used to secure the support of particular segments of the electorate or to checkmate their opponents (Hart 1994; Kerbel 1995, 1998; Iyengar 1991; Patterson 1994). In such an environment, even small differences in sound bite length can be meaningful, as presidential candidates rarely are given more than a sentence or two on the network evening newscasts to explain what they would do as president and why they should be selected (Farnsworth and Lichter 2003).

There is no definitive survey or critical experiment that purports to show how much news, how many details, or how much exposure to the candidates is "enough" to produce either a minimally or optimally informed electorate. But the existing body of evidence shows that even small changes in television news content can be influential on voters' perceptions of issues, candidates and the election itself (Cappella and Jamieson 1997; Farnsworth and Lichter 1999, 2002, 2003; Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Iyengar 1991; Waldman and Jamieson 2003).

Writing from a more general perspective, some researchers have argued that the declining amount of election news on television and the heavily mediated coverage the remains together have negative consequences for the polity (cf., Edelman 1985; Jamieson 2000; Patterson 2000; Postman 1985; Putnam 1995, 2000). Experimental evidence strongly supports the proposition that less substantive coverage in campaign news increases voter cynicism. "When journalists frame political events strategically, they activate existing beliefs and understandings; they do not need to create them" (Cappella and Jamieson 1997:208). But research in this area has not has not identified a precise threshold where audience effects become observable in experimental settings.

Even so, past scholarly research demonstrates that citizens are able to distinguish among news outlets of varying quality. When asked to grade sources of campaign information, citizens award higher scores to campaign information sources that offer more substance in the information provided, as measured by content analysis (Farnsworth and Lichter 2003). They also pay more attention to those media sources -- most notably newspapers and cable television -- that provide more substantive coverage of recent presidential elections, abandoning in large numbers the horse race dominated coverage found on network television (Pew 2000b). Both cable news channels and newspapers generally provide higher quality news than the television networks, particularly when quality is measured by such things as the total amount of coverage and candidate-oriented discourse (cf., Farnsworth and Lichter 2003). This is true also of events during the campaign that draw the largest audiences and highest marks from viewers, such as the candidate debates and appearances on talk shows (Pew 2000b).

The efforts to improve local television news examined here are consistent with the attention citizens devote to local news (Allen 2001; Gilliam and Iyengar 2000; Kaniss 1991). A 2000 Pew survey found that 21 percent of those surveyed said that local news represented one of their top two sources for campaign news, virtually identical to the 22 percent who listed network television as one of their leading sources (Pew 2000b). Along these same lines, a 1996 Harris poll found that a plurality of respondents considered local television news to be their most important news source, by a substantial margin over both network television and their local newspapers (*Media Monitor* 1997). In that survey, 34 percent said they preferred local television news, 22 percent said that network television news was most important, and 18 percent said they relied most on their local newspapers.

Research Design

The evaluation research for the study was designed around a quasi-experimental approach known as paired comparisons. This approach compares two subjects that are as similar as possible with one notable exception - one subject of the pair has received some "treatment" or experimental stimulus, while the other has not. For the purpose of this evaluation, the 5/30 and BP projects each represented such a treatment. The control station was selected as the highest-rated network affiliate station in a given city not participating in either program.

The programs sampled included all late afternoon, evening and post-primetime nightly news shows that aired between 4 p.m. and 11:35 p.m. during the 30 days before Election Day, November 7, 2000. The design specified that local news coverage stations could meet the "five minute" standard through the contents of either a single news program or any combination of programs. Of course, the schedules of many of the stations varied. For instance, San Francisco's KRON (BP) scheduled 61.5 hours of news, while KPIX (5/30) and KGO (control) devoted 51 hours each to the news shows. Philadelphia's WTXF scheduled only 30 hours of news, because WTXF is a Fox network affiliate, and airs no late afternoon or early evening newscasts. By contrast, Philadelphia's KYW (5/30) and WPVI (control) both scheduled 51 hours of news during the month of coverage examined.

In 10 of the 14 markets examined here, at least 85 percent of each station's news was collected for this research project. For two of the outlets missing or otherwise unusable tapes posed enough of a problem that less than 70 percent of the possible news was captured. In San Francisco and Raleigh/Durham, the amount of missing data was sufficient to call into question the value of statistical comparisons between the treatment station and the control. We were only able to view 58 percent of all newscasts on KRON (BP), and we cannot know whether the missing material was randomly distributed. Only 68 percent of all news time was viewed on WTVD (5/30) the Raleigh/Durham treatment station. We include San Francisco BP station KRON in the data analysis that follows, but only with the caveat that the observed data may not accurately represent the content of all newscasts that were actually seen by viewers. However, comparisons between the other San Francisco treatment station, KPIX (5/30), and KGO (control) pose no problem, as more than 90 percent of possible news time on each station was collected by Pew and provided to CMPA.

In addition, the nation's largest media market -- New York City -- is not represented in the sample, because the taping that was originally planned did not take place. In both Baltimore and Kansas City, instead of tapes from one treatment and one control station, we received tapes from two treatment stations. This made paired comparisons impossible for these two cities, although these treatment station data were still used in aggregate comparisons. (The data tables shown below demonstrate that the treatment stations in Baltimore and Kansas City generally behaved similarly to other treatment stations.)

(Figure 1 about here)

As a result of the data limitations discussed above, we relied on percentage totals except as otherwise noted. Figure 1 shows the 31 sample stations analyzed here, after allowing for the dropouts noted above. They represent 14 cities, including six of the country's ten largest media markets. Among these are 14 Alliance stations employing the 5/30 approach, five WPT stations employing the BP approach, and 12 control stations. Four cities have both a 5/30 and BP station.

The sample ultimately yielded 15 pairs of treatment versus control comparisons: 11 5/30 stations and four BP stations.

To measure whether election news was substantive and candidate centered, we consider two criteria that researchers have associated with high quality coverage (cf., Kerbel 1995, 1998, 2001; Lichter and Noyes 1995; Patterson 1994). They are: (1) sufficient coverage to give viewers a reasonably full picture of the ongoing events as well as the candidates and campaign issues; and (2) candidate-centered coverage that allows the candidates to present themselves to voters in a reasonably direct and unmediated fashion.

To transform these criteria into observable indicators, we measured campaign coverage as the proportion of the total news time, minus commercial broadcasts, allocated to election news. To determine the frequency of direct communication by candidates, we measured the amount of airtime during which the candidates themselves discussed substantive issues, as opposed to journalists or other sources (amount of candidate speaking time as a percentage of total speaking time). We also examined the amount of candidate discourse here in a second way, by measuring the average length of candidate sound bites in the news reports. We also compared the local coverage to that of the national nightly news programs on ABC, CBS, and NBC to provide a backdrop that places the paired comparisons between local stations into a broader perspective of local versus national campaign news.

Amount of Coverage

If election news is to serve the public interest, news outlets must at minimum provide enough coverage to give voters a sense of who the candidates are, which policies and principles they stand for, and where their disagreements lie. This minimal measure of quality election news gave the 5/30 and BP stations the same advantage over the control stations, though a majority of the differences were too small to achieve statistical significance, as Table 1 shows. In a pattern that was to be replicated throughout the analysis, the greatest differences between the treatment and the control stations were found in the smaller markets. In fact the differences in the amount of campaign coverage found for treatment versus control comparisons in the six largest markets examined here – Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Chicago, San Francisco, Boston and Detroit – all failed to achieve statistical significance. By contrast, four of six possible comparisons involving stations in markets the size of Tampa/St. Petersburg or smaller showed statistically significant differences at the .01 level that favored the treatment station; the differences in the other two stations in this group approached conventionally acceptable levels of significance.

(Table 1 about here)

In addition to comparing each Pew treatment station with its control in the same market, we aggregated the campaign air time across all stations from each category. The results appear in Table 2. Relative to their available air time, the treatment stations collectively devoted 50 percent more coverage to campaign news than did the control stations, by a margin of 12 to eight percentage points on average. While the treatment stations' average was higher, even the control stations on average exceed the 5/30 program objective. The margin was greatest among the BP stations, with 14 percent campaign news, compared to the 5/30 stations with 11 percent. (In this and all other aggregate comparisons, Boston station WCVB was included in calculations for both the 5/30 and BP aggregate totals. However, it was counted only once when data for all treatment stations were summed together.)

(Table 2 about here)

T-tests revealed a statistically significant difference between the percentage of campaign news on the treatment stations and the control stations as well as between the subset 5/30 stations and the control group ($p < .01$). The differences between the subset of BP stations and the control stations also achieved statistical significance ($p < .01$). All the local station totals were dwarfed by those registered by the broadcast network evening newscasts. During the same 30 days ABC, CBS, and NBC devoted 24 percent of their newscasts to Election 2000 - twice as much as the Pew treatment stations and three times more than the percentage found on the control stations.

To summarize, in terms of the sheer amount of coverage devoted to the general election, the group of Pew treatment stations (including both the BP and the 5/30 stations) provided significantly more campaign news than did the control stations. The percentage difference of campaign news found in those stations and that found in the broadcasts of their competitors (the control stations) was highly statistically significant. Of course, it might be argued that the 5/30 stations should have been expected to produce more coverage, since the program committed them to five minutes of candidate-centered air time per day. But our data show that, at minimum, they did not fulfill this pledge by cutting back on other election news. The real test of this "campaign promise" comes next, as we consider how genuinely candidate-centered the coverage was at the 5/30 stations and elsewhere.

Candidate Air Time

To determine the degree to which election coverage was candidate-centered, we divided all stories according to the speaking time given to candidates, reporters, and all other sources, respectively. It is important to differentiate actual speaking time from time appearing on-screen. Only when speaking could the candidates communicate their messages and establish a sense of themselves as individuals to the audience unmediated through the interpretative lens of a journalist. For ease of presentation, however, in the discussion that follows, we will use the terms "air time" and "speaking time" interchangeably to refer to times when the candidate's actual words are being heard while he or she appears on screen.

Table 3 shows the percentages of speaking time accorded to reporters, candidates, and other sources at each station in the sample. A striking feature of this table is the similarity of results between the treatment and control stations in the largest markets. In both Los Angeles and Chicago, the 5/30 and control stations devoted the same proportion of speaking time to candidates – 16 percent in the former city and nine percent in the latter. In Philadelphia, the best practices station and the control station both featured candidates in 16 percent of the available air time, while the 5/30 station was close behind at 14 percent (none of these differences are statistically significant).

(Table 3 about here)

Note that in these first four comparisons, none of the treatment stations exceeded the controls in the percentage of time allotted to candidates. The six comparisons involving stations in Los

Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, and San Francisco yielded only one instance of a statistically significant difference, and that case favored the control station. Indeed, one of the most striking observations to be made about Table 3 is that all the largest stations surveyed devoted relatively little time to candidate commentary, just as the networks did (Farnsworth and Lichter 2003).

Once the comparisons moved beyond the top five markets analyzed here, however, the picture changed dramatically. Boston's WCVB, the only station in the sample that participated in both the 5/30 and the BP projects, more than doubled control station WHBH's candidate air time, by 23 percent to 11 percent. This statistically significant difference was one of five relating to the mid-sized to smaller markets, including Tampa/St. Petersburg (BP v. control), Sacramento/Stockton (5/30 v. control), Raleigh/Durham (5/30 v. control), and Tulsa (5/30 v. control). In six of the nine comparisons for Boston and smaller markets (seven 5/30 and two BP stations), the candidate air time was over twice that of the control station. The greatest difference was found in Tulsa, where 5/30 station KJRH gave a remarkable 43 percent of its speaking time to candidates, nearly as much air time as the 47 percent occupied by reporters, and nearly five times the candidate air time on Tulsa control station KTUL.

Table 4 shows the average proportions of candidate airtime found on the different station groups. Overall, candidates received 22 percent of the available air time at the Pew treatment stations analyzed, compared to only 12 percent at the control stations. The 10 percentage point difference held for journalists as well, who accounted for 63 percent of the air time at treatment stations and 73 percent at control stations. The difference between the treatment stations and the control stations is statistically significant. Both the 5/30 stations and the BP stations have a statistically higher amount of candidate airtime than the control stations.

(Table 4 about here)

Ironically, the proportions of air time accorded to journalists and candidates at the control stations were almost identical to those that we measured on the broadcast network evening news shows. It would appear that, absent some intervention, local television election news outside the Pew treatment groups offered voters less a choice than an echo of the network news format that is so frequently criticized for its highly mediated approach to campaign news. The real difference was found in the treatment group stations.

Sound Bite Length

The paired comparison results for sound bite length produced results similar to those for overall air time. The comparisons found in Table 5 again show little difference in the largest markets. Of the six comparisons possible among the top five market stations surveyed, only the Chicago comparison achieved statistical significance, and it did so to the advantage of the control station.

(Table 5 about here)

In Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, and San Francisco, no treatment or control station exceeded an average of 14 seconds per sound bite, and the average dropped to as low as nine seconds at Chicago's WBBM. At the opposite end of the scale was Tulsa, the smallest market in the study and 58th largest in the nation. There, 5/30 station KJRH averaged over a full minute per sound bite, more than six times as long as the 10 second average on Tulsa control station KTUL. Six of the 5/30 stations, the largest of them in Detroit, the nation's ninth largest media market, averaged over 25 seconds per sound bite. The shortest average sound bite of any control station was Detroit's WDIV, with only 16.2 seconds. In Boston and all the smaller-than-Boston markets examined, all nine of the possible comparisons are statistically significant, and all are statistically significant in ways that favor the treatment station over the control station. This is in sharp contrast to the performance of the largest markets, where not a single treatment station had a statistically significant advantage over the same-city control station.

The aggregate sound bite totals in Table 6 show the magnitude of the difference between the treatment and control stations. The 19 second average at the treatment stations represents a 65 percent margin over the 11 second average sound bite at the control stations. The 5/30 stations fared best of all, at nearly 21 seconds per sound bite, but the BP stations also outdistanced the control stations, with a 14 second average. Both groups of local stations easily surpassed the broadcast networks, where the eight second sound bite that we measured is now taken for granted by researchers. But viewers of Pew treatment stations could hear candidates present their ideas in blocks of time that were more than twice as long in local newscasts than in the network evening news shows. The relationships are all statistically significant in favor of the treatment stations, and these longer blocks of time for candidates can help increase viewer learning about both candidates themselves and the issues those candidates consider meaningful.

(Table 6 about here)

These findings suggest that commitments to provide more candidate-centered coverage, as operationalized by participation in a 5/30 or BP project, were not only fulfilled by the sheer amount of air time made available to candidates. These stations also provided candidates with uninterrupted segments of speaking time that were unusually lengthy by the standards of contemporary television news. As with the other variables we have examined, these findings held true across the board for all but the largest markets, where the Pew treatment stations were virtually indistinguishable from the control stations.

Summary/Conclusion

This evaluation was undertaken in order to determine whether participation in the 5/30 and BP projects by local television stations was associated with higher quality election news than that which appeared on other stations. The research design matched a sample of these Pew treatment stations with control stations in the same markets and compared each pair of stations on each measure of quality. We also measured the magnitude of differences between the two groups of stations by aggregating the data for each variable across all markets to provide mean comparison scores.

The model of high quality election news consisted of devoting substantial air time to the campaign and centering the coverage on the candidates, by allowing them unmediated speaking time overall and through more extensive sound bites. On every measure used in this analysis, the treatment stations as a group provided higher quality news coverage, and did so to a statistically significant degree over the control station group. There was more coverage on the treatment stations (Table 2), candidates were given significantly more air time overall (Table 4) and longer sound bites (Table 6). All of those statistically significant differences with the control stations held when the treatment group was broken into the two subgroups: the 5/30 and the BP stations.

On balance, the results suggest that the treatments increased the likelihood that matters of substance would be covered in greater depth, and gave viewers greater opportunities to hear candidates talk about their candidacies themselves. These changes are of the sort previous experimental researchers have found are significant in affecting citizen learning about candidates and campaigns, as well as the changing the way that citizens frame campaigns (Cappella and Jamieson 1997; Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Iyengar 1991). (Of course, any causal inference is limited by the inability to control for self-selection in the treatment sample.)

The only substantial intragroup difference that we observed was that of market size. Coverage of the Pew treatment stations located in the nation's top five media markets was consistently far more similar to that of the control stations, and less likely to surpass them in measures of quality, than were the remaining treatment stations in the sample. This is a departure from past research (Davie and Lee 1993). One possible explanation for this unanticipated result is that major market stations plan well in advance to devote a certain amount of air time and a set amount of resources to elections, and their coverage is more routinized. So participation in a 5/30 or BP project may represent a relatively small change in their overall plan. In smaller markets, however, participation may represent a significant management decision regarding both the focus of the news agenda and the allocation of resources. This may lead to a more thorough restructuring of the coverage. A second possible factor is that stations in the largest markets are all owned and operated by the networks and hence most influenced by the norms of network election news, which emphasize heavily mediated coverage. This could make station management and on-air "talent" reluctant to deviate in highly visible ways from established procedures.

In sum, this evaluation concludes that participation in both the 5/30 and BP projects were positively associated with every measure of quality election news, although the association was weak or nonexistent in the largest media markets. Content analysis provides the opportunity for researchers to speak at length regarding differences in media presentations, but the technique has little to say authoritatively regarding how that coverage can affect the viewing public. For that, surveys of media users who watched these stations' newscasts are required. Nevertheless, past research into the consequences of campaign coverage does allow for some speculation.

First, it seems quite likely that citizens appreciate the higher quality coverage provided by most of the treatment stations. Citizens routinely give low grades to network news media outlets, and express a desire to hear more about the issues and to receive more information from the candidates directly (Farnsworth and Lichter 2003; Patterson 1994; Pew 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2000d, 2000e). This seems more than simply offering a response calculated to be socially desirable, as the viewership patterns themselves confirm a movement away from the lower-quality network news coverage dominated by coverage of the horse race, and possessing ever-briefer sound bites (Pew 2000b). The evidence here and elsewhere suggests that citizens say they prefer and actually gravitate towards higher quality news programming for their election coverage.

More broadly, though, this process of promoting high quality campaign coverage has the potential to aid the polity generally (cf., Hart 1994; Patterson 1994; Putnam 2000). When the candidates themselves provide substantive material about campaigns, they remind voters that such things are more important than who is ahead in the competition for high poll ratings. By doing so, higher quality reporting can play an important role in setting the public agenda for the election and framing the campaign around matters of substance (Bennett 2001; Cappella and Jamieson 1997; Graber 2002; Iyengar 1991; Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Lawrence 2001). Greater media emphasis on substantive campaign content helps remind citizens that elections are about significant matters of governance, not about "nothing more weighty than whether the gregarious chairman of the Inter-Fraternity Council will beat the earnest leader of the Science Club" (Hershey 2001:70). Research indicates that media projects designed to promote more candidate-oriented coverage can play an important role in reducing the corrosive public cynicism often seen in American politics (Craig 1993, 1996; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 1995).

The evidence here demonstrates that efforts to improve the quality of campaign news in local television can have significant effects, particularly away from the largest media markets, where the networks' own local stations are located. Past experimental efforts suggest that changes no greater in magnitude than those observed here can affect the ways citizens evaluate candidates and frame campaigns. By covering campaigns more effectively, reporters and candidates give citizens more information, and better information, to help them select their elected representatives.

Figure 1 – Sample Stations

	Alliance Stations 5/30	*WPT Stations BP*	*Control Stations*
Los Angeles	KCBS		KABC
Chicago	WBBM		WLS
Philadelphia	KYW	WTXF	WPVI
San Francisco	KPIX	KRON	KGO
Boston	WCVB	WCVB	WHDH
Detroit	WXYZ		WDIV
Tampa/St. Petersburg		WFLA	WTSP
Cleveland	WEWS		WJW
Phoenix	KNXV		KTVK
Sacramento	KCRA		KOVR
Baltimore	WJZ & WBAL		
Raleigh/Durham	WRAL		WTVD
Kansas City	KSHB	KCTV	
Tulsa	KJRH		KTUL

TABLE 1
Percent Campaign Coverage
Ratio of Campaign News to Total News Hole

	Station	Percent Campaign News	Campaign Minutes	News Hole (Minutes)*	t-values	Sig.
2 Los Angeles	KCBS – 5/30	8%	145	1,722	1.05	.30
	KABC – Control	6%	137	2,138		
3 Chicago	WBBM – 5/30	11%	148	1,338	.75	.46
	WLS – Control	9%	188	2,005		
4 Philadelphia	KYW – 5/30	11%	202	1,767	.71	.48
	WTXF – BP	11%	135	1,260	.39	.70
	WPVI – Control	10%	219	2,222		
5 San Francisco	KPIX – 5/30	13%	243	1,836	.53	.60
	KRON – BP	13%	162	1,240	.44	.66
	KGO – Control	12%	228	1,922		
6 Boston	WCVB – 5/30 and BP	11%	250	2,222	1.23	.22
	WHDH – Control	9%	184	2,134		
9 Detroit	WXYZ – 5/30	10%	258	2,564	.55	.58
	WDIV – Control	9%	188	2,067		
13 Tampa/St. Petersburg	WFLA – BP	16%	326	2,079	2.98	.004
	WTSP – Control	8%	171	2,026		
15 Cleveland						
	WEWS – 5/30	10%	198	1,943	2.86	.01
	WJW – Control	6%	166	2,783		

Table 1 (cont.)
Percent Campaign Coverage
Ratio of Campaign News to Total News Hole

	Station	Percent Campaign News	Campaign Minutes	News Hole (Minutes)*	t-values	Sig.
17 Phoenix						
	KNXV – 5/30	19%	284	1,529	12.01	.00
	KTVK – Control	4%	111	2,798		
19 Sacramento/ Stockton						
	KCRA – 5/30	11%	266	2,541	1.73	.09
	KOVR – Control	8%	155	2,067		
24 Baltimore						
	WJZ – 5/30	6%	150	2,594	NA	NA
	WBAL – 5/30	9%	176	1,948		
29 Raleigh/Durham						
	WRAL – 5/30	10%	193	2,008	1.62	.11
	WTVD – Control	6%	96	1,516		
31 Kansas City	KSHB – 5/30	16%	253	1,589	NA	NA
	KCTV – BP	17%	308	1,769		
58 Tulsa						
	KJRH – 5/30	14%	217	1,596	3.80	.00
	KTUL – Control	6%	96	1,541		

*Number of minutes of local news programs (less commercials) on the tapes received by CMPA. Available sample of news from each station varied due to differences in the number and length of newscasts per day, taping errors, pre-emptions (sports and presidential debates), and tape damage.

Table 2
Aggregate Proportion of Campaign Coverage

	Percent Campaign News	News Hole (Minutes)	t-values	Sig.
Treatment Stations	12%	36,567	7.01	.00
5/30	11%	27,997	6.32	.00
BP	14%	8,570	2.48	.01
Control Stations	8%	25,219		
Broadcast Networks	24%	1,980		

Local TV based on all news shows from 4 p.m. to 11:35 p.m. Networks based on ABC, CBS, and NBC evening newscasts. T-tests compare treatment and control local stations.

TABLE 3
Proportion of Speaking Time

	Station	Journalist	Candidate	Other	Total	t-values	Sig.
2 Los Angeles	KCBS – 5/30	64%	16%	20%	100%	-1.28	.20
	KABC – Control	64%	16%	20%	100%		
3 Chicago	WBBM – 5/30	79%	9%	12%	100%	.58	.57
	WLS – Control	76%	9%	15%	100%		
4 Philadelphia	KYW – 5/30	70%	14%	16%	100%	1.43	.15
	WTXF – BP	64%	16%	20%	100%	1.89	.24
	WPVI – Control	77%	16%	7%	100%		
5 San Francisco	KPIX – 5/30	69%	12%	19%	100%	-2.43	.02
	KRON – BP	68%	17%	15%	100%	.18	.86
	KGO – Control	73%	14%	13%	100%		
6 Boston							
	WCVB – 5/30 & BP	64%	23%	13%	100%	6.89	.00
	WHDH –Control	75%	11%	14%	100%		
9 Detroit	WXYZ – 5/30	57%	25%	18%	100%	.28	.78
	WDIV –Control	66%	16%	18%	100%		
13 Tampa/St. Petersburg	WFLA – BP	62%	20%	18%	100%	2.54	.01
	WTSP –Control	72%	8%	21%	101%*		
15 Cleveland	WEWS – 5/30	53%	33%	14%	100%	.44	.66
	WJW – Control	70%	15%	15%	100%		

*Doesn't total 100% due to rounding error

Note: Amount of speaking time given to journalists, candidates, and all other speakers. T-values and significance reported for the candidate speaking time. Very different sample sizes create very different standard errors. Therefore the difference necessary to achieve significance varies from media market to media market.

TABLE 3 (CONT.)
Proportion of Speaking Time

	Station	Journalist	Candidate	Other	Total	t-values	Sig.
17 Phoenix							
	KNXV – 5/30	46%	32%	22%	100%	1.72	.09
	KTVK – Control	64%	7%	29%	100%		
19 Sacramento/ Stockton							
	KCRA – 5/30	65%	14%	21%	100%	2.18	.03
	KOVR – Control	81%	10%	9%	100%		
24 Baltimore							
	WJZ – 5/30	75%	15%	10%	100%	NA	NA
	WBAL – 5/30	73%	14%	13%	100%		
29 Raleigh/ Durham							
	WRAL – 5/30	58%	36%	6%	100%	5.72	.00
	WTVD – Control	78%	8%	14%	100%		
31 Kansas City							
	KSHB – 5/30	55%	25%	20%	100%	NA	NA
	KCTV – BP	74%	8%	18%	100%		
58 Tulsa							
	KJRH – 5/30	47%	43%	10%	100%	3.48	.00
	KTUL – Control	72%	9%	9%	100%		

TABLE 4
Average Proportion of Candidate Airtime

	Journalist	Candidate	Other	Total	t-values	Sig.
Treatment Stations	63%	22%	16%	101%*	6.90	.00
5/30	61%	23%	16%	100%	6.44	.00
BP	67%	17%	17%	101%*	-4.76	.00
Control Stations	73%	12%	16%	101%*		
Broadcast Networks	74%	12%	14%	100%		

T-test comparisons involve treatment stations versus control stations.

*Doesn't total 100% due to rounding error.

TABLE 5
Average Candidate Sound bite Length in Seconds

	Station	Seconds	t-values	Sig.
2 Los Angeles	KCBS – 5/30	13.7	1.49	.14
	KABC – Control	10.4		
3 Chicago	WBBM – 5/30	9.2	-2.05	.04
	WLS – Control	10.8		
4 Philadelphia	KYW – 5/30	13.5	1.78	.08
	WTXF – BP	10.7	-1.81	.07
	WPVI – Control	12.1		
5 San Francisco	KPIX – 5/30	13.7	.55	.58
	KRON – BP	11.3	-1.67	.10
	KGO – Control	13.0		
6 Boston	WCVB – 5/30 & BP	13.3	5.90	.00
	WHDH – Control	8.7		
9 Detroit	WXYZ – 5/30	30.3	4.46	.00
	WDIV –Control	16.2		
13 Tampa/St. Petersburg	WFLA – BP	19.9	2.08	.04
	WTSP –Control	10.8		
15 Cleveland	WEWS – 5/30	34.9	5.58	.00
	WJW – Control	12.1		

TABLE 5 (CONT.)
Average Candidate Sound bite Length in Seconds

	Station	Seconds	t-values	Sig.
17 Phoenix	KNXV – 5/30	**27.0**	5.64	.00
	KTVK – Control	**14.4**		
19 Sacramento/Stockton	KCRA – 5/30	**11.6**	3.50	.00
	KOVR – Control	**8.5**		
24 Baltimore	WJZ – 5/30	**10.1**	NA	NA
	WBAL – 5/30	**8.6**		
29 Raleigh/Durham	WRAL – 5/30	**28.6**	4.3	.00
	WTVD – Control	**10.2**		
31 Kansas City	KSHB – 5/30	**34.3**	NA	NA
	KCTV – BP	**13.7**		
58 Tulsa	KJRH – 5/30	**60.9**	3.68	00
	KTUL – Control	**9.9**		

TABLE 6
Average Candidate Sound bite Lengths

	Seconds	**t-values**	**Sig.**
Treatment Stations	**18.8**	9.46	.00
5/30	20.7	10.32	.00
BP	14.1	-3.15	.002
Control Stations	**11.4**		
Broadcast Networks	**7.8**		

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